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POEMS

PO E M S

BY

CLIFFORD KING

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO. LTD.

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1912

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POEMS



CORONATION ODE.¹

INSCRIBED TO THE KING'S AND QUEEN'S MOST
EXCELLENT MAJESTIES.

GREAT BRITAIN'S EMPIRE ! Mother of us all !
Awake !—thy loving sons upon thee call !
Time shakes his glass, and on thy dial points
One sweet-stern hour which history anoints
To-day ! This Day a leaf God wisely tears
From archives which corrosive Time ne'er wears !—

Strong are the links, Sire, Thou dost forge each day
In wisdom, love, which ne'er can rust away,
But weld Thy Peoples all in one blest tie
Of amity and peace, prosperity.
Thy heart (which *first* is MAN'S and *then* a King's)
Knows no restrictive throbs, no selfish things,
But beats responsively to pain and woe
When e'en Thy meanest subject bears the throe,
That age's throat and child's alike proclaim :
“ Though robed in majesty He's *ours* the same ! ”
And not alone this side of Britain's shore
Thou dost confine Thine influence, but o'er

¹ *This Ode was published in The Brecon County Times of 23rd June 1911. It also appeared in The Morning Post of India (Delhi) of 12th July 1911.*

Far seas and distant Continents and climes
 Thy wisdom is reflected many times.
 Vast India's multi-million souls
 Wait to embrace the Sceptre which controls
 Her fifth of earth's inhabitants in peace.
 Nor from *her* pæan doth old Egypt cease,
 Whose sphinx at last to *Thee* (not *Ædipus*)
 Hath granted all her riddles' truest guess—
 The secret of her Country's hope and joy !
 Far Australasia, Canada, help buoy
 In filial loyalty the Empire's barque.
 East, West, South Africa (no longer " dark "),
 And all Dependencies, both small and great,
 Reflect Thy sway and their augurial fate.
 And see,—not Thy proud subjects now alone
 Do homage unto Thee, Thy state, Thy throne,
 But wearers of the *world's* like-dazzling crowns
 Yields miles, on England's hearth, and banish frowns !—

GREAT EMPIRE (nay, let's call thee " Mother "—it
 The sweetest word life's lexicon hath writ),
 Salute the Day, thy Monarch, and our God,
 And crave His guidance of the sceptred rod !
 The Ptolemies, Napoleons, Cæsars—yea,
 And Alexanders (mere Colossi-clay !)
 Wore slaughter's vile magnificence of power.
 Athenæ's blue-eyed maid then from such hour
 In tears her ægis broke, her Gorgon veiled,
 Her Dardan lance's impotence bewailed ;
 The terrors from her awful mien fled,
 The " gods " of earth Medusa wore instead !
 But our blest Monarch, GEORGE THE FIFTH, To-day,
 In virtue, peace, and love, marks out His way.
 No subject and no Empire could desire
One regal attribute the more or higher
 Than " Mother's " Guardian-Son liath nobly shewn
 So soon, so filial, while short time hath flown.
 To be a *man* is more than to be king,
 And to be *both* is e'en a heavenly thing !
 Peace hath a grander panoply than War—
 A crown past Ariadne's septem-star—

A shield of more divine magnificence
Than great Achilles' at Troy's eminence ;
A prouder oriflamme to dim the sun—
A greener laurel o'er her conquests won—
An epic past Homeric pen to write—
A Pharos for posterity's far sight !
Its legacy unto the blissful Land
It shelters is not weighed by human hand
In balances as base—its currency
Scorns sordid, rusting, brief affinity
With Cræsus' crumbling riches, or the vast
And dazing treasures Philadelphus cast
Around his feet—an Eden held beneath.
Blest Britain's Empire, wear thou Peace's wreath,
With rev'rent thanks to God, to Emperor—
Both Peace's Champions, polarising War !
From Alexander's brow, from Cæsar's arm,
Flash'd lightning-death, and to the world alarm ;
Blood was the genius of the Corsican :
Red Herod, more than child, proved less than man ;
And Cleopatra's sable eye controlled
More fatal bolts than Zeus could ever hold
(At but a glance a world could shattered lie ;
Clay sprang to life by that Promethean eye) :
Athena scattered death with Jovian wand,—
But in his *heart* GEORGE carrieth command !
Let Pompey's victor, Philip's son, the rest,
Arise and thunder bloody lust's behest,—
He who is master o'er himself and birth
Is greater than a master of the earth !
Where is the ruby star of Rome to-day ?
Where gorgeous Persia's magni-crimson ray
By Xerxes lit, by the Dariæ, too ?
Where pompous Macedonia's stellar view ?
Doth Pericles' red torch blaze at this hour,
Or Gothic flame which could great Rome devour ?
Nay, where the later sun—of Tyrian dye—
The Gallic Phœbus drove o'er Europe's sky ?
All set, extinguished, in Cimmerian night
By Time (that master-sexton) and by right !

Far, far serener, and of choicer ore,
 Imperishable, blissful more and more,
 Is that empyrean Circlet, seraph-made,
 Which—all unseen by hosts to-day arrayed
 In Static, ceremonious gaiety—
 Rests, as Heaven's Super-Crown of Majesty,
 Upon the SON, the HUSBAND, FATHER, MAN !
 His heart beats not alone in life's brief span,
 But that within each subject's votive breast
 Throbs with it loyally, serene, and blest !—

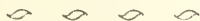
And SHE, proud Britain's fairest, sweetest Rose—
 Our Monarch's Consort,—who the fragrance throws
 Of virtue, charm, and grace, and piety
 Around Her home, and State, and past the sea,
 That Her enkindling Name revives a soul
 In apathy's insidious, dull control.

As DAUGHTER, WIFE, and MOTHER, She
 To all the Empire is a Mirror free,
 Held high aloft by God's unerring Hand,
 Who shines the Glass on many a wondering Land !
 Where would the Lustre be of Britain's Crown ?
 Where purest Pearl therein to match renown ?
 Where were the Loadstar of His destiny ?
 Where to His happiness the brightest Key ?
 Yea, where the magic of a Voice as sure
 To solace, aid, and teach Him to endure ?
 (A little word a mighty doom controls :
 A whisper volumes of old Time unrolls !
 Oft doth the choice come with appalling awe—
 To hear a word, or meet the lion's paw !)
 Then let us crave God's blessing o'er Her life,—
 Free from oppression, sorrow, and from strife ;
 That, with His guidance, life shall be
 A voyage o'er a halcyon, silvery sea !—

Hail, Sire ! Our King, our Model, and our Friend !
 Our Brother, Sympathiser (one rare blend) !
 The great *Te Deum* of Thine Empire swells
 From throats more chiming than cathedral bells !
 Anointed by the God of all mankind,
 Of life and death, of mysteries combined,

To sway the greatest Empire ever known,
May He give strength to bear Thy serious crown ;
And let His warning, saving Whisper speak
Above the thunder of the guns which break
From earth's four quarters in salute of Thee ;
And *His* less mortal voice rise constantly
O'er this day's echoed loyal greetings, which
All races, colour, join in, poor and rich !
The terror, splendour, pomp, magnificence,
Of navies, armies, and State's affluence
Are frail and tinsel masks concealing death—
Their efforts but their own expiring breath—
Unless the Eye which marks a sparrow's fall
Is humbly craved by King, by subject—all !
Then, Sire, all hail, as Realm so vasty lays
A leaf more fadeless even than the bay's
Upon Thy brow To-day, and one above
Thy diadem in price—a People's LOVE.

22nd June 1911.





ODE ¹

WRITTEN UPON THE IMPERIAL CORONATION DURBAR AT DELHI.

INSCRIBED TO HIS MOST EXCELLENT AND IMPERIAL
MAJESTY GEORGE V., KING OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND, EMPEROR OF INDIA.

FAIR India of the centuries, which pass
With Atalanta step while in their glass
Man stares bewildered at life's mysteries,—
Thou hallowed echo of antiquities,—
The mother e'en of millions doubling those
Which 'neath imperial, vanished Rome arose,—
Thou monument o'er crumbled dynasties,
And Phoenix which from fire and blood doth rise,
Behold ! The dearest and the steeliest link
(Of which Great Alexander could not think—
Thy sponsor of historic destiny)
Is forged To-day to sure and sacredly
Unite the loves, the splendid hopes, the hearts,
The gilded glories, the illustrious parts,
The noble heritage, of Britain and
Thyself 'neath King's and Emperor's command !
Yea, Britain's GEORGE, in love for thee, To-day

¹ *This Ode was published in The Morning Post of India (Delhi) on Durbar Day. It also appeared in The Brecon County Times of 8th December.*

Twines such a cord of hearts beyond their clay
That Alexander's crimson hand would be
But palsied now *this* knot to vainly free !
E'en Phrygia's peasant-king would emulate
Such art to tie the loop of Asia's fate !
Henceforth thine annals proudly shall attest
The truth that LOVE is victor o'er the best,—
That empires, dynasties, and Static sway
Are one with mortal dust (things of a day !)—
That tyrants' power a Dead Sea fruit appears,
Which falls to ashes e'er its virtue cheers—
That peace, prosperity, and commerce, all,
Are grinning skeletons beneath their pall,
Unless God's Attribute which, like a dove
Descending on a rainbow from Above,
Beatifies and mellows with its grace
All hearts, ideals, of the human race !—

And thou, grey Delhi, which the altar is
Whereat th'Imperial nuptials, in such bliss
Of peace, are consecrated by the God
Of battles, creeds, and colour, on the sod
Enshrined by blood and tombs with heroes' dust,
Arise ! Thy festive loyal robe thou must
Again adorning wear, as when upon
That New-Year's Day thou proudly first didst don
The mantle of thy liberty and peace,
And hailed Victoria Empress : nor didst cease
In like affection, gratitude and pride
When Edward stood as Emperor at thy side !
That Lady's Heir, that Gentleman's own Blood,
Comes with like offering, as rich, as good—
That is, A HEART THE NOBLEST MAN CAN WEAR,
To feel and love and mutually to bear
(If thou thine Empire's lexicon but scan
Thou'lt find its Emperor translated “ MAN ”) !
Take then, old Delhi, His outstretchèd hand ;
The mutual grip unites thine Empire's land
With Britain—loving Mother of the free !
The world is reading this day's augury

From your momentous nuptials-politic :
 And may the Father of the dead and quick
 (Who clothes the lily of the field far past
 The glories of a Solomon) e'er cast
 His care, His wisdom, guidance, love, and aid
 Around such splendid destinies now made,
 By welding more thy triple-million souls
 In that same filial blood which constant rolls
 Its dear Ætnean lava through the hearts
 Of all Great Britain's sons whom *death* but parts !—

Sire,

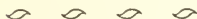
Enter, then, Thy heritage to take—
 A casket far exceeding human make !
 The “ Gatherer of the Nations ” doth To-day
 Place in Thy hand a key (past work of clay)
 To ope that consistory of a doom
 Of Empire-in-an-Empire and resume
 The noble and the glorious work which Thy
 Belovèd Parents left exemplary,—
 A key Pangæan forged by angels' skill,
 Imparting magic at its Holder's will ;
 One which, to be without, earth's conquerors
 Find vain their crowns, ambitions, and their wars !
 The sword may be the key to sordid power,
 And mark an empire's glory hour to hour
 Upon the bloody dial of its doom,—
 That blade will rust and share a mortal's tomb !
 Then, Sire, take India's hand from metric mine,
 Beholding all her ready gates combine
 In throwing wide their portals unto thee—
 Thou Who To-day turn'st LOVE's own witching key !
 The Tarsian spoke for vassals and for kings :
 “ Faith, hope, and love, abideth these three things,
 Yet, lo, the greatest of them all is *love* ! ”
 More soft than down on seraph's wing Above,
 And finer than the silk-worm's airy skein,
 This is with *Thee* a far more puissant chain
 Than th'Aloides held the war-god with !
 Weave, then, Thine Empire's hearts,—so shall the wreath

More truly bloom than Pæstum's virgin rose !
Yea, Sire, as the talarian moments close,
Thou hold'st, with clasp of love, a mightier force
Than did the Theban (of vast strength the source)
When he the Nemean name of terrors held !

LOVE CONQUERED DEATH—

THUS HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE WELD !

12th December 1911.





A NATION'S WELCOME HOME

FROM THE IMPERIAL CORONATION DURBAR IN INDIA.¹

G REAT BRITAIN, Sire, respectful welcomes Thee,
E ntering Thy home within her mighty heart !
O h, Emperor-King, no Rubicon of sea
R esists Thy wise, progressive, loving chart !
G reat classes, sects and creeds in unity
E ffectuate *the wishes of Thy heart !*

R egalia in the Static scales by Thee
I s balanced but by Thy HUMANITY !

4th February 1912.

¹ *The above lines appeared in The Brighton Herald of 3rd February 1912; also in The Morning Post of India (Delhi) of the 21st.*



ODE ¹

WRITTEN UPON THE INVESTITURE OF THE TITLE OF
“ PRINCE OF WALES ” UPON H.R.H. PRINCE
EDWARD ALBERT CHRISTIAN GEORGE ANDREW
PATRICK DAVID, K.G., AT CARNARVON.

SIR,

WALES, with love and pride, greets Thee to-day
In nuptials National, Imperial, gay,
For she (once mother of a dynasty)
Would feel her bosom vacant without Thee,
Her worthy and historic Child and Prince !
The tears she hath been often weeping since
The progeny of her own flesh and blood
Were lost to her (Llywelyn ap Gruffudd
And Dafydd ap Gruffudd), in such as *Thou*
Are now transformed, beneath her aged brow,
To purer and more precious amber than
Heliadean streamlets ever ran !
Great Britain, in Thyself, but comes to home—
That matrix whence true Britons widely roam
(No Offa's Dyke to circumscribe them now),—
Fulfilled hath been prophetic Myrddin's vow :
“ The British race in Britain still shall rule ” !
And as the years have round Time's facile spool

¹ *This Ode was published in Wales Magazine of July 1911.*

Spun out their histories and destinies,
 To-day proud Wales adopts (as Chief of Ties
 Uniting blood and valour, glory, love)
Thyself—named “DAFYDD,” too, by God Above !
 The ancient Romans, Normans, Saxons, all
 Sleep 'neath the silence of oblivion's pall—
 Their lustre, might, and martial lust decayed—
 Their fierce magnificence a vanished shade !
 But Britain and the British still survive,
 And they, like Phœnices, shall stubborn live
 And mount the dust of wreckage spread by Time,
 While Hephæstia's torch (with Spark sublime)
 Is held by human runners such as Thou !
 Then, hail, Sir,—PRINCE OF WALES,—beneath the brow
 Of hoary Snowdon which benignly stands
 A witness (past the World's and Time's commands)
 To this All-festive day and Royal Rite,
 As it thus stood before the Cymric might
 When at *Caer-yn-ar-Fon* England first beheld
 Her blushing Prince—the Second Edward—weld
 The dignities, the glories, the illustrious blood,
 Of British sway and monarchs time-withstood !
 An Edward and a David, thou dost rise
 To make, Sir, the sweet rhythm of centuries !
 Let this Salute be as Wales' nightingale,—
 Her chord from druids' harps o'er hill and dale—
 Her psalm to God, to England, to the World,
 For peace ; but strength 'gainst foes with flag un-
 furled !
 Henceforth *Ich Dien* on Thine arms shall shine,
 Who Wales and God as Champion dost combine :
 'Tis Heaven's own passport mortals must deserve—
 That motto (one of serf and prince)—“ I SERVE ! ”

“ RHYD-Y-GODOR.”
 (C. K.)

13th July 1911.

PEACE, THE SUPER-CROWN.¹

HAIL, dovelet messenger of mortals' God !

Like seraph on a gleaming wing of flight,
Thou bearest for our Empire's sceptred Rod
The rarest Pearl, above a conqueror's might !
Where *thou* dost reign, the heart of man and child
Beats to the chords of its own happiness,—
The mind serenely is of pangs beguiled,—
The soul itself partakes of Earth the less !

Arch thou thine own rich rainbow o'er the Pair
Anointed by the God of all to sway
Earth's vastest Empire, yea and the most fair ;
That with such arc before Them day to day
'Twill mirror Hope when shadows cloud the sky
Of Britain's greatness, heritage, and fate !
Thy crown, made by no hands save heavenly,
Place thou o'er Theirs to govern then the State !

Thou art the lark which soar'st in minstrelsy
Through virgin dewdrops of the new-born day,
'Neath Phosfor's first-lit lantern of the sky,
To carol thus at Heaven's Gate thy lay !
Sweet Peace, oh, in thine all-celestial song
Let mingle too the anthems of mankind ;
That e'en the poor and rich, the weak and strong,
Forget the Earth and leave their clay behind !

¹ These stanzas appeared in "*Pearls of Poesy: A Biographical Birthday Book of Popular Poets of the Period at the Time of the Coronation of King George and Queen Mary*" (Stock, London, 1911, Edit. Forshaw), also in *The Morning Post of India (Delhi)* of 28th December 1911.

To
THE DEAR MEMORY OF
MY LOST MOTHER
THE FOLLOWING DRAMATIC POEM OF
"ANSELMO"
IS TENDERLY INSCRIBED.

Through storms of life thou e'er dost rise
And shine my Rainbow from the Skies !

" Her children arise up, and call her blessed."—*Proverbs xxxi. 28.*

MORS JANUA VITÆ.
VITA ET MORS MISCENTUR IN UNO.
MORS CLAVIS SCIENTIÆ.

" . . . O LORD . . . WE ARE THE CLAY, AND THOU OUR POTTER ;
AND WE ARE ALL THE WORK OF THY HAND."—*Isaiah lxiv. 8.*

JESUS CHRIST :

" Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn [or, grain] of wheat fall into the ground and [thus] die, it abideth alone : but if it [thus] die it bringeth forth much fruit."—*St John xii. 24.*



ST PAUL :

" That [seed] which thou [thyself] sowest is not quickened, except it [thus] die [first]."—*1 Corinthians xv. 36.*

PLATO :

" *Cebes*—' What, then, is produced from death ? '
Socrates—' . . . Life.'"—*PHAEDO, § 44.*

SCIENCE :

" New living matter is produced from the non-living nutrient substances."—*Lionel S. Beale, F.R.S. (Religio-Scientia, Religio-Vita—1902.)*



PHILOSOPHY :

" Life and death are irrevocably united."—*Ernst Hæckel, Ph.D. (The Wonders of Life—1904, p. 100.)*

ΘΕΟΣ-ΔΑΙΜΩΝ ΣΤΡΕΦΩΜΑΙ.

Εγὼ ἡ κατασκευάσας φῶς, καὶ ποιήσας σκότος, ὁ ποιῶν εἰρήνην, καὶ κτίζων κακά · ἐγὼ Κύριος ὁ Θεός, ὁ ποιῶν πάντα ταῦτα.—*ΗΣΑΙΑΣ xlv. 7.*

Omnipotens tuus sermo è calis è throno regali præcisus bellator in medium interitui adjudicatæ illius terræ desiliit, Ut gladium acutum, ferens mandatum tuum non simultatum, qui consistens implevit omnia morte. . ."—*SAPIENTIÆ, xviii. 15, 16.*

ANSELMO.

CHARACTERS :

ANSELMO, *a recluse.*
CLOTHO }
LACHESIS } *the Fates.*
ATROPOS }

JUPITER.
SPIRITS.
NYMPH OF THE WATERFALL.
THE SPIRIT OF BUONA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The exterior of ANSELMO's cave in the Pyrenæi.*
Midnight. A tempest raging (thunder and lightning),
which gradually abates as the soliloquy proceeds.
ANSELMO emerges from the cave, and soliloquises.

Ethereal chaos,—frensied, awful night !
Ye elements, though bodiless yet great,
How mortal, recreant, microcosmical,
Do ye, in magni-lust of power, make
That clay called Man—of but Icarian wit !
In Nature's riot of destruction thus,
Man hath his own apocalyptic view,
And feels his God—thy Armageddon's Source !
Yea, then his shrivelling dust and quaking soul
(Strip of what godhead he had madly feigned)
Stands naked in his own mortality—
The fool of Nature, and the toy of Time,—
Himself a ruin mirror'd through the storm !
If thus Creation speaks its Mysteries
Profound, magnificent, enthralling, and
Majestic (subjugating Man and Earth,—
Supremest gospel teaching one that he
Is less than dust, the other less than air !) ;
And if we fail in soul, in mind, in heart,
To be initiated to that TRUTH

Declared by Voice all-glorious and supreme,
As mortals we must reverently bow
To Powers which thus distil a heaven in us,
And by such grand, supernal magic, link
Our carnal selves to Immortality !
Ye rough despoilers of the beauteous air,
E'en like the callous funeral pall around
A spotless maid with violet eye and blush
Of roseate hue (the Hesperus of life
Rose-tinting now her youth's fair, driven snow),—
Ye giants of the air above, around,
With movements free, despotic, terrible,—
Ye stern companions of my midnight watch,
How I do love ye, for ye are to me
The sole and cheerful mates of my lone soul !
Yea, man can have communion e'en with you ;
For often far more rhetoric escapes
Those tongueless and non-carneous cosmic things
Than can be uttered by the human throat.
The heavens above, the earth below, the whole
Expanse of Nature, and the marvels of
The universe, Creation's mysteries,
Are pages in that Glorious Book arcane
Which God to mortals luminously writes
For simple *souls* to read and understand,
Not for the super-Attic wit alone !
Thus—thus doth man, in contemplation, e'er
Merge in Infinity ; his mind expands
From wonder unto dread, from dread to love,
From ignorance miscalled philosophy,
To that absorbing Wisdom all-divine !
An exile from the company of man
(Whose modes of vile existence match not mine,—
Though kin in one creation, both our states
Of being differ, as the bustling stream
Is stranger to the stagnant, lonely pool)
My soul commingles with yourselves around,
Which seem to be her new-found parents fond ;
For nature woos but nature in all things :
Thus did my soul (like to the primal dove)

Escape from out the foreign horde of men
 And linger in her genial home when found.—
 The violence of the night abates.

I'll in

And meditate again.

To meditate ?

Thoughts are the day-dreams of the wandering soul—
 Now pupils and now masters of our fate.
 What weighty deeds, what actions past recall,
 Owe their enactment to a source so slight !
 Yea, Niles of tears too oft are made to flow
 By one erratic thought put into deed ;
 And pyramids of woe are sometimes reared
 By hands too willing pupils of the mind !
 E'en States and Empires can themselves be wrecked
 By one mere mental act employed in haste !
 Man's character a lifetime takes to build ;
 But to destroy it, only needs an hour.
 Yet, thoughts have oft led mortals by the hand
 To nobler spheres of being, and have lit
 With cunning torch the path to greater things.
 Ay, thoughts, by their sweet magic, fill again
 The vacant chair and " home " complete once more,—
 The spirits brightening all our day-dreams when
 The clouds arise and night is premature !
 But I will seek my flinty couch and woo
 What mental wreckage, ruins, Hope hath left.
 Oh, could I sleep, and thus forget I lived !

[Retires into cave.

SCENE II.—*Before a waterfall. Moonlight.*

A SPIRIT *arises from the waters, and sings.*—The storm
 hath passed away ;

The clouds have followed him,—
 Fair Luna did dismay

The fiend from the brim
 Of yon tall mount which she
 Her crystal eye o'er-gazed :

The stars her pageantry,
 Already forth have blazed

Their vestal torches bright
 In worship of their queen,
 And empress of the night :
 They make the sky a sheen
 Of awe, of glory bright,
 They glorify the earth
 With sacred, essenced light ;
 They awe man from his birth
 With soft solemnity :
 He is akin to them
 As his nativity
 Springs from a transient stem—
 He waxes into life,
 And twinkles in despair,
 Then wanes from living strife
 Into dissolving air !
 I'll call my sisters here
 To bask within the joy
 Of moonbeams soft and clear—
 Those lights without alloy ;
 And watch the waters' spray
 E'en deck the air with pearls,
 And see the stars array
 Themselves within the curls
 Of foam by bright reflex,
 And on the moonbeams dance
 In fairness multiplex.
 But quick, morn doth advance.
 Come, sisters, all appear ;
 And see this hallowed night,
 And in her mirror clear
 Behold an earthly sight !

[A pause.

What, lazy, lingering, or
 Disdainful of the sight
 Earth but conserveth for
 The eye of mortal wight ?
 The gaze will cheer you up ?
 And will refresh your eyes,

And to the vital cup
Add purer ether. Rise !

[*Another pause.*]

Nay, ye must miss not now
This beauteous view and night.
By our strict mutual vow
Which binds our beings tight
In kindred essence and
Inviolable state,
In union in the land
Of ether soft yet great,
Arise, I say,
Without delay ;
No longer stay
From me away.
Don't miss
This bliss.
I call ye here.
Appear—appear !

*Several SPIRITS arise like the first, and answer the latter
in chorus :*

Sister, at thy bidding see
Thou hast now our company.
We could never
From thee sever ;
Joined in love and bound by oath,
Mated by a mystic troth,
Vain to say each one were loth
To obey or to be wroth.
Like the waves
Of the sea,
Each but craves
Company.
Say, then, why thou callest us ?
Is it to behold thee thus—
Lonely gazing on the earth
Desecrate by mortals' birth ?
Or is it to view the scene
Breeding human sorrows keen,—

Mocking mortals with delight
 Short-lived as the stars of night,—
 Painting pictures in the hues
 Of a rainbow (to diffuse),—
 Raising visions to their eyes
 Like the wisps of air arise,—
 Crowning them with Glory's crown
 Death usurps but for his own,—
 Placing in their hand a joy,
 Bubble to ambition cloy,—
 Giving pleasures like the beams
 Of the sun that fades as dreams,—
 Making loving ties that last
 Till their ecstasy be past,—
 Making friendships like the brooks
 Gracing but the fairest nooks,—
 Where the wealth of meanest men
 Bring them local godheads then,—
 Where the spiteful passion reigns
 Keener than a mother's pains,—
 Where hypocrisy assumes
 Virtue's shape and honour's plumes,—
 Where the human life is like
 Lightning-flash that quick doth strike ;
 Like the vapour melting in
 Aerial nothingness so thin ;
 Like a breath upon the glass
 That from view doth quickly pass ;
 As a bubble in the air
 Bursts in space and vacuum bare ;
 Dream material that doth fade
 As death's night withdraws her shade ;
 Like a passing zephyr'd breath
 Floating in the air of death ;
 Ignorant that " life " but spells
 " Death " (in both man twinly dwells) ;
 Like decaying fruit that grows
 Whilst a fair exterior shows ;
 Spacial element that lives
 And on Nothing briefly thrives ?

Is this why
We must fly
 Here,
And descry
That old sky
 Clear :
Tread the earth
Past whose girth
 We
All had birth
From all dearth
 Free ?

Sister, we await thy tongue
Now our chorus we have sung.

FIRST SPIRIT (*still singing*).—Kind sisters, the beauty of
 night

Did tempt me to linger in it ;
And rainbow'd by moonbeams so bright,
 This fall woos me by it to flit.
The glow-worm, with lantern so meek,
 Doth timidly hide from the moon
Her candle so fair and so weak,
 And longs to dissolve in air soon.
The air is so breathless that I
 Seem to think it a bower of repose :
In purity sweet is the sky,
 To view it I could but dispose.
The stars seem to speak from a book
 In secret but opened to them,
For testing them by a long look
 I learn that some Power doth condemn
Such spirits as we only to
 Inhabit an air and a light
Exhaling and lit from the blue.
 Oh, wonderful voices of night ;
The eloquent letters of Truth ;
 The symbols of mystic estate
The records of Glory, in sooth ;
 Revealers of wonders create !
Such beauties of earth and of sky
 Did tempt me to summon ye here ;

But, sisters, we homeward can fly,
 If weary of earth, and rest there.
The other SPIRITS (likewise singing, in chorus).—E'en as
 thou speak'st the morn
 Begins to dim her light ;
 And stars so lately born
 Will fade in day more bright ;
 The modest glow-worm hath
 Already hid her ray :
 The moonbeams from their bath
 Are summoned by the day.
 The air's soft virtue is
 Transfusing into chill.
 All things are now amiss,
 As day asserts his will.
 Come, sisters, come,
 Let us go home,
 No longer roam
 'Midst earthly hum.
 On airy foam
 'Neath ether's dome
 As we whilome
 Upward here clomb,
 Away !
 Don't stay
 Till day.
 Fly apace,—
 Dawn doth chase
 In our race.
 Come—come !
 [They vanish into the waters.]

SCENE III.—*Interior of ANSELMO'S cave.*

ANSELMO is seated on a stone, soliloquising. A taper
 is feebly burning in a niche near. A skull rests upon
 a piece of rock by his elbow.

My taper burns but dimly ; 'tis not strange ;
 For the exhaustless torches of mine eyes

Out-watch the native glare of flickering lamps.
Ah, could I sleep and drown my racking thoughts
Within the inky Lethe of repose !
Could I forget the past and *she* who made
That past the Eden of my life, and who
Was doomed to helpless cast my present lot
Amid the desolation of despair,
Remorse, and bitter penance of the soul !
Yet, like the pebbles on the ocean's beach,
We, by the battling of the waters, get
More beautified in nature by the strokes
Affliction meetly lavisheth on us.
E'en Solomon, whose wisdom was Heaven's gift,
Hath taught that tears are tutors more than smiles.
I need that angel Omar Khayyám sought :
That " happy hour " the lyric Hafiz sang ;
And hear that " traveller's bell " he yearned to hear.
Though dark within, there is a beacon in
My heart, my mind, my soul, which is indeed
More inextinguishable than the lamp
Which burnt its heavenly light at Venus' shrine ;
Or than the Persian's Holy Fire eterne ;
Or yet th'eternal candle Cranmer lit !
This flesh clogs still to earth, the curse hath sped,
And works as ceaseless as the canker's tooth.
And yet, I'm not ungrateful for my doom,
For man's true mirror is his sorrow's state,
Which teacheth him the highest wisdom of
The soul : the gem must be excavated from depths
Beneath the earth and ocean, so this stone
Of human knowledge must from out the vault
Beneath his surfaced life be delved in grief !—
Grave Solon, could I but participate
Within the speedy knowledge of thy creed
And gain that single " happiness by death,"
'Twould consummate mine aspirations all !—
Thus Sophocles : " It is not death alone
We have to fear—to die is not the worst
Of human ills ; it is to wish for death
And be refused the boon."—How true—how true !

Again he sings : “ When pleasure is no more,
 Man then is but an animated corse,
 Nor can be said to live ; he may be rich,
 Or decked with regal honours, but if joy
 Be absent from him, if he tastes them not,
 ’Tis useless grandeur all, and empty shade.”
 And other great minds have concurred with him.
 But ’twill not be : we atoms in Time’s glass
 Must only feel the quick vibrations of
 Encircling transient nature, and await
 Our single turn to drop through crystal space !
 The moments urge us on and hold us back,—
 Come bringing smiles and also tears in turns,—
 Diffusing roses treacherous with thorns,—
 They race with us, but sternly gain the goal,—
 Yea, on the mortal dial they maintain
 Inexorably life’s obedient hours !

We chase each morrow with the feverish toil
 And varying hope and martyred eye of faith
 Which Eastern children are imbued withal
 Before the Kashmere blue-winged butterfly ;
 And, like this insect-queen, each pleasure oft
 Charms, tempts, destroys our eye, our feet, e’en life :
 The wooing hues too soon dissolve when touched,
 And prove that pleasure is more beauteous when
 It is remote or hovering in our chase !

[*A weird, distant bell heard, then a small red light appears
 in the cave’s extremity, which momentarily flickers
 then disappears.*]

Hark ! My sepulchral mates await me now.
 Mine aim, my love, my sole ambition, hath
 Long been to hold communion with the things
 By art forbid to man, that I may still
 Delight in partners helpful more than he.
 My breakless vigils, and unbreakable,
 Lured my responsive mind to caves remote
 Where I unearthed the magic charm to rule
 O’er those fantastic forms which ether moulds—
 Th’inhabitants of worlds abstruse to ours.
 I’ll commune with them once again, if but

To learn what they can further teach from out
 Their subtler wisdom and th'immortal book.—
 Ye things of air, ante-created to
 Ensure the birth of man to mortal life ;
 To epochs make in his existence here ;
 And his umbilic thread to cut for aye,
 I thus command your presence by the charm
 My science hath revealed by o'erwrought mind !
 Ye know this magic sign which makes ye serve
 E'en me a mortal, though to Jupiter
 Himself ye scorn to bow in servitude.
 Approach !

[THE FATES *arise from the darkness of the cave's extremity.*]

THE FATES (*addressing ANSELMO in unison*).—Superior
 mortal, to thy will
 (That sceptre greater than our parent's wand
 That awes the gods yet cannot sway o'er us)
 We hasten from our ultra home to bow.
 What is within our province to confer
 Is thine the boon.

ANS. Too much lies there, ye hags,
 For why this loathsome life was navelled, ask
 Herself the youngest of ye triplet seed
 Of Zeus's foul amour, and Clotho shall
 Thus lesson me in knowledge which *one* died
 In wonder of (and whose last ashes keep
 Cemented to my memory—their urn—
 Like those which Helen's temple altar'd near
 Its door, and which no winds could waft away) ;
 In its ignition did my life not catch
 One kindling ray from Clotho's coronet
 Of stars, for 'tis a vaporous glow in night !
 And in my darksome being do mine eyes
 Invert their sense, as the more hallowed orbs
 Gaze from their firmament upon a world
 Of midnight underneath : such life she lit
 (As waters of Anapanomenos
 Were said to coldly light a torch at night)
 But ante-dates my breathing death !

Nor, too,
 Doth Lachesis' fantastic robe of stars
 Grace mine existence with the smallest spark,—
 Unless, forsooth, reflection on a pool
 Of stagnant ink can be miscalled a light
 (A light which gives a virtue tangible) :
 Or as the skimming fire-fly o'er its face,
 So impotent to lend a native gleam ;
 Or as the alienated light which scuds
 Compassionless o'er Southern seas at night,
 Emitted by the small medusæ's strings,
 And by the phosphorescent salpæ too—
 The ocean's wisps, or Neptune's chandeliers ;
 Or as the false illumination from
 The blazing fire Antiphriscus did paint !
 " What's in your province " ?

Far too much,
 Yet, not enough ; for there is that which could
 Steep me in sweet oblivion——
 CLO. Mortal, why
 Deserve I thy vile scoffing,—*thine*, a thing
 Of dust as loathsome as the snake thy kin ?
 Who, of a mortal nature, didst perform
 The conduct which *immortals* scorn to *think* :
 Slayed by unfilial life that precious life
 Which gave thee *thine*,—ay, like the callous frost
 That warps the ripened blossom ; or the bolt
 From out the lightning's womb doth rive the oak,
 Thou killedst that sweet, mellowed growth ; and
 brok'dst

In twain the dearest heart of thy——
 ANS. No—no !
 Name not *her* name : its sound would greet mine
 ears

Like that dire prelude to an avalanche !
 Thou growest insolent ; but know, my power
 Can call the Furiæ to thee torment——
 CLO.—The Furies are our sisters, errant wight,
 And, like the deities, inferior to
 Ourselves.

Wert thou as magicless as are

Thy fellow-mates——

ANS. What mates, thou ranting jade ?

I'm Timon of mankind. My mate by day

Is but a rotting skull ; by night, the owl.

The rooks consort,—the eagle soars alone.

All Lycomedes' court chose gewgaws, save

Achilles,—he, the sword. I choose a skull.

CLO.—Thou haughty mortal, wert thou as thy kind,

The Furies would begird thee——

ANS. “ Would ” ?

Thou mock'st

Me, slave.

Couldst thou but be the partner of

My wanderings, meditation, of my life,

Thou wouldst discern their havoc in my soul,

Which fosters her exotic brood as e'en

The hen that incubates her goslings strange !

Those Furies have ta'en subtler shapes and dwell

Monopolising settlers in strange land !

The reptiles leave their hirsute lurking-place

Thy sisters' locks provide, to coil around

My heart ! The bloody drops thy sisters' eyes

Exude, is drawn, too, from my veins ! The torch

Within each hand of theirs sears all my life !

My thoughts provide the scorpions for their whip

(My mind breeds more than Alabanda did !).

Then, threaten not ; their black habiliments

Do awe me not by sight—their name by sound,—

They are familiar !

What did Juvenal

And Lucian sing (whose chorus echoes still) :

“ The verdict of the criminal's own breast

Condemns him, and he ne'er acquitted is.”

“ Our evil deeds are branded in our souls

Unseen but sure.”

But now I see thou art

Too powerless, finite, in thy knowledge, to

Assist me. Hie thee to thy home in space

For ever !—

[CLOTHO disappears.]

(*To LACHESIS*) Maybe thou, coy spinner, canst
Afford the gratifying help I seek.

LACH.—Speak, lofty mortal, and I must obey.

ANS.—How “lofty”?

Xerxes viewed the battle ’tween
His fleet and Greece’s from Ægaleos’ mount :
My conflict is with *Time*, which I but watch
From out a cave upon the flattest ground !
How “lofty” then ?

Enough. I crave a boon.

LACH.—I wait to grant it if thou wilt but ask.

ANS.—Then, know I do desire thee to desist
Unravelling more my stubborn thread of life :
It hath already been too long by far !

LACH.—This is not in my power. Our Clotho doth
Supply my distaff with th’incessant flax,
And I fulfil my shirkless task.

ANS. Thou yet
Hast got the power to control and watch
The fibres in their mechanism ; and
I’d ask thee to prevent the *knots* in mine.

LACH.—This further boon I cannot, either, grant :
The native quality of every skein
Entwists and wreathes itself when quit of me.
What else ?

ANS. “What else ?”

I have not yet *one* boon.

Like to Antigonus the Dосon, and
Like old Theagenes of Athens, thou
Dost promise much, but not a thing dost give.
Back to thine own invisible abode !—

[*LACHESIS disappears.*]

(*Soliloquising*) I’ll trust no more to superhuman
things,

But in the darkness of despair will grope
My way unto the grave which is so far
Though o’er the waves of mine existence have
Mine efforts (like Euphemes’ airy feet)
Skimmed swiftly to but vainly seek it out.
Yea, in that quest I would outrun the fair

Harpalyce and Atalanta, or
The lightning Lampon, or Echion, or
Dinolochus, Polites, Dolon too,
And shame the wild Borean steeds themselves !
Ay, Asahel and Jonathan and Saul
Would tardy be to run such race with me ;
And brave Phidippides would yield to me :
The lightning-footed Atas would retire.
'Twixt life and death I seem the pendulum !
This flesh but clings unto my weary life
Like moss around the rotting, barren trunk,
I'm like an empty shell cast on the beach,
Which speaks but in a tongueless, echoed voice !
Like Echo, I am stone yet have a voice :
Or changed, like Canens, to a whispering death !
I'm such a human stone which Ovid sought.
I would these greyish locks were so by age,
And that my ploughed-up brow were Time's mere
deed,—

I'd wear them all far nobler then ; but nights
Anticipate the years, and kill for them !
Weeks can be longer years than Esdras knew.
E'en these my youthful years have winters been,
And no congenial spring relieves the frost—
Not e'en the spring of one short, fleeting day
(That hour when Saul was oiled as Israel's king) :
Life hath two winters, like Taprobane !
Old Sophocles sang all in vain for me,
That " e'er uncertain is to-morrow's fate ! "
The Delphic oracle prescribed to both
Trophonius and to Agamedes too,
Death as the best of gifts that man could ask :
And Juno taught Cydippe likewise thus ;
Cleobis, too, and Bion learnt the same.
'Twere verily the best of gifts to *me* :
But though I've wooed it in its varied forms,
My soul is backward held by finest thread
Fast to this fleshy coop, as falcons are
Restrained in hasty flight by silken string !
Wise Pyrrho taught that life and death are one :

Such stern conclusion I've myself premised.
 "A good man never dies." Cyrene's sage,
 Callimachus, sang eloquently truth—
 Took thus a nobler view of human life,
 And taught that virtue e'er embalms our names.
 Another sage, Confucius, too, affirmed
 That virtuous men are fadeless on the earth :
 But I, though vile, seem that to contradict.
 The poets say the beautiful and good
 Decay and die the soonest : and 'twould seem
 In me the witness to its living truth !
 I've still left in my science power to reach
 High Jupiter and crave a final boon.
 I'll go ; and if I be successful not,
 I can, like victor-Cincinnatus did
 Unto his plough, return here to my cell,
 And will defer unto the god's decree
 And profit by his counsel (not like Rome's
 First emperor who, careless, pushed aside
 The paper Daldianus wrote to him
 As warning of his after-murder true :
 Or like to Archias, Thebes' polemarch,
 Who spurned the high-priest's warning too fulfilled.)
 Spoke Theophrastus wisely ; Cicero,
 In Latinising him, bore witness to
 The Grecian : *Vitam regit fortunam*
Non sapientia.

Enough of thought.

I'll go——

ATR. Anselmo !

ANS. Ha !

Thy robe of jet

Blent with the darkness past my taper's reach,
 That I perceived thee not, nor thought of thee.
 Perchance thou canst thyself give what I wish,
 And save my straight appeal to Jupiter.

ATR.—Thou'rt not afraid, to judge from thy last speech.

ANS.—"Afraid" ?

Of him whose masters (thee and thine)

I do command ?

I've watched in loneliness
His fiery bolts at night in tempests fly,
And thought them beacons cheering to my soul !
I've, in the same tempestuous war, inclined
Mine ears unto his thundering voice, and deemed
'Twas but an answering echo to mine own !
" Afraid " ?

The Elder Cyrus, when a boy at play,
Was chosen by the urchins as their king :
And *I*, in boyhood superhuman, am
The same to-day !

" Afraid " ?

Though tempted much
By those who would have loved me dear and long,
And by mine own estates now forfeited,
To linger and to live with other men,
I've chosen thus the cell before the world—
As Curius Dentatus chose his pots
Of clay to gold and silver vessels, when
The Samnites to his hut went temptingly ;
And Cyprianus changed his wife for cave ;
And Hercules at Lydia's royal side
Sat spinning while she donned his lion's skin.
" Afraid " ?

Did not the marching Hannibal
And army cross th' " impassable " Alpes,
And Xerxes subjugate tall Athos, too ?
Did not old Jesse's pastoral, youngest son
Subdue the lion and the bear of old,
And naked met the armoured Philistine ?
These were but men, and superhuman not,—
I'm *both* !

My lexicon hath not " afraid."

ATR.—But Death, the tyrant, awes all mortals.

ANS.

List.

I lack Darius's nobility ;
Who wished his death to be his foeman's deed,
Than he to fall his own vile criminal.
I've stood on yon high rock and would have dashed

This weary body in the fall's abyss !
 I've starved myself (as Menedemus did ;
 Augustus' daughter, too ; Cocceius Nerva ; and
 Pythagoras, with more success),—
 But I'm long-lived as Dandon, or as the
 Hyperborei : I, like Herilus,
 Seem to possess a threefold life indeed !
 Unlike Demosthenes who fled
 Therefrom, and as Archilochus who ran
 From fight, *I* have confronted gaping death
 In various forms, more bold than Scævola,
 Or than Ignatius 'midst the lions' roar ;
 Or Œdipus, or as Anchurus, or
 As Æthiopia's old Macrobian.
 I've echoed Philoctetes' piercing wail :
 " O death ! where art thou, death ? so often called,
 Wilt thou not listen ? wilt thou never come ? "
 Some new-born Dracon seems to write my fate.
 From death an airy and tormenting hand
 E'er holds me back ; and e'en the very air
 Seems to suffice for nutriment to me
 As 'tis to the chameleon, and to that
 Rhyntaces of old Persia Plutarch states
 When writing of King Memnon : even by
 The very spirits I myself command
 I have been rescued from the waters' depths !
 I seem, Tiresias-like, seven lives to have !
 The dogs of Daphnis pined away upon
 Their master's death ; but baser still am I !
 'Tis strange we cannot die from sadness when
 From joy man hath succumbed (Philippides,
 Philemon, Dionysius Younger, and
 Diagoras, Ænetus, Chilo too.)
 Philosophy and Science prate in vain ;
 The ancient heathen and the Scriptures too,
 Who vow that life and death are one combined !
 I have no fond Arria to instruct
 Me how to die, as she her Pætus taught.
 My life, like Asphaltite's briny sea,
 Seems to buoy up my venal dangers, and

E'en suffocate old hovering Death himself :
As buoyant, too, as Arethusa's lake.
Aurelius' elbow-death stands not by me.
" Afraid " ?

I fear but *life*, not death, nor gods !

My life, like Meleager's, seems to be
Controlled by some existing burning log
Which *thou and thine* decreed for him at birth.

If so, wilt thou divine to me where I
May find some new Althæa to preserve
The log from out the fire that I may die ?

ATR.—It cannot be : his birth and destiny
Were moulded in a star apart from thine.

ANS.—Yet, thou hast got the power to divide
The skein too subtly holding me to life ?

ATR.—Necessitas, our mother, bores the nails
Of brass to fix decrees,—we but obey.

My task is set to cut the *human* thread :

Thou art superior to the mortal kind ;

Thy wretched doom lies, therefore, with the gods !

ANS.—Thou dost equivocate, foul hag, with me
Thou art superior e'en to Zeus the king
Of all the gods (ye three alone are so).

Then,——

ATR.—True ; but only as the sun is prince
Of lights yet sympathises with his slaves.

Like him, our trio band is powerful,

Yet we diplomatise in our estate.

ANS.—Ye grantedst life to young Admetus once.
Was that " diplomacy " ?

ATR.—Rebellious clay ;

Apollo, sceptred, was his advocate,

Our brother, too,—we, therefore, were constrained.

Besides, we readier heard Apollo's prayer

From pity for his banishment from home,

And he degraded to a shepherd's work.

But even then Admetus' life we made

Conditional : his wife Alceste gave

Her life for his.

Hast *thou* a proxy——

ANS.

What,

Thou talk of pity moving thy black heart
Of adamant ?

When didst thou pity take
Upon the soft, convulsive infant rocked
Upon its new-made mother's breaking heart ?
When didst thou pity blooming, brilliant youth
Declining prematurely, like a flower
Which withers on its stalk from early blight ?
When pity tossing maniacs, surfeited
With miscalled life, yet ignorant of it ?
When pity invalids who languish on
A bed, when they'd rest easier in the grave ?
When pity worn-out age that scarce can know
The mocking truth that it is living yet ?
Thy " pity " in such cases tardy comes.
Nay ; dost thou pity *me*, who have all these
Ill attributes about my life, when *one*
Of them sufficeth to kill other lives ?
Do I not merit pity more, if but
For that sad reason ?—I, whose heart hath died
And is a flint (no *Nævian* razor could
Cut it in twain, and no *Democritus*
Could it dissolve) ?—I, who——

But I'll not waste

My breath, though deathless, on immortal things !
ATR.—What's in my power I'll duteously perform ;
That is to make thy death——

ANS.

A holiday

For wanton boys to keep each cycling year,
As *Anaxagoras* besought ; and as
Anchises' memory was constant kept
By frolics at his tomb ; or as the death
Of *Melicerta* was remembered by
The *Isthmian* games.

ATR.

But were not these promulged

To do the dead some honour ?

ANS.

'Twas but mock,

Then. *I* should like mankind to view my death
In such a way from *joy* that they have lost

Their basilisk, their enemy, their hell !
 Unlike the plague-curst Herod, I seek not
 To force vain weeping at my sweet decease.
 I want no Phœbus my last sleep to guard ;
 Nor vigils kept by any Thetis then,
 As she the corse of Hector sentinelled,
 To make his death majestic and his form
 To still maintain in fairness all-divine :
 Nor wish I her my body to preserve,
 As she Patroclus saved from vile decay.
 No god-like grief or monument I wish,
 Which to Sarpedon willed the Thunderer.
 Nor urge I such a torch which lit the soul
 Of Cæsar to the gods, to herald mine ;
 Nor for the sun and nature all to weep.
 Death makes all one in his republic grave :
 Within his most unerring scales the dust
 Of kings and serfs, of rich and poor, of lord
 And wretch, of hale and sick, of beauty and
 Of ugliness, of youth and age,—yea, *all*
 Terrestrial dust (misnamed vitality),
 Have equal weight, and worth, and rude contempt.
 Death is Life's mirror, Life is Death's—they each
 Behold their native counterpart, and know
 'Tis but exchange of masks from fool to fool !
 ATR.—It shall be strictly so : thy wishes all
 I barter to fulfil.

May I descend ?

ANS.—Stay.

Let no hand unseen strew flowers upon

My tomb, as, unexpected, Nero's was :
 Nor flower-bed as did Omar Khayyâm's grow ;
 Nor tearful leaves, like those o'er Phyllis' tomb,—
 But, like Lycurgus' grave, be mine unknown !
 Let earth and sea accord me Sciro's fate,
 And both deny my body burial !
 Or should my tomb be traced, let no one find
 Its charge, but Cleomedes' fate be mine !
 Yea, like Alcmena's, be my body lost !
 And see these wishes are respected, not,

Ignored as those were of Diogenes.
 'Tis said that Attila two coffins had
 Of gold and one of silver, but for me
 The naked sea-beat granite would suffice !
 Provide no Scopas for mine architect
 (Death laughs at symbols ; yet the Soul smiles back !).
 Yea, Man, thus sublimated, gazes back,
 And tears away that Mask from Life's fair face.
 In quintessential, last embodiment,
 And learnèd in th'Arcana of his God,
 Man triumphs o'er the wreckage of his dust,
 And blots from Earth the word Mortality—
 Death thus Life's shadow, not the Principal !
 There is *no* " Death ",—'tis LIFE misspelt by Man !
 Thou may'st retire for aye.

[ATROPOS *disappears*.
 'Tis feeble help.

I'm mocked by e'en the spirits I command,—
 I've raised them all in vain !

Where shall I turn
 To find that peace my soul pants for in vain,
 E'en as the soaring lark to taste an air
 More hallowed than the tainted fume of earth,—
 That peace which, like the breath of Heaven along
 Th'eternal vault, soothes all the elements ?
 I have a peace, but 'tis the silence of
 Decay,—the stillness of a cave (as this)
 Relieved but by the moaning wind,—the calm
 Which awes the waves but leaves their current still
 Below,—the hush upon the autumn wood
 Disturbed but by the rustling, chilling breeze ;
 Which also brings the leaves of withering bloom !
 We are the dunces in the school of life :
 We plunge in quest of knowledge, but the waves
 Dash back the struggling mind into the gulf
 Of fear and thought, unfathomed, awed and dark !
 " Man " ! Where's the lexicon which tells thy sum ?
 It must be near to day-dawn : I'll approach
 The cavern's mouth and watch it.

[*Exits*.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The entrance to the cave.*ANSELMO *emerges therefrom and soliloquises.*

Tender streak,

Which usherest the glory of the day,
And lightest brilliantly the noonday sun
(Which once in horror shrank back from his course
When viewing base Thyestes' sordid feast :
And also turned to night the bloody day
Of long contending Medes and Lydians ;
Yea, and stood still at Joshua's command ;
And quenched thy light at Troy when Juno bade),—
Thou issue from the womb of night, that seem'st
To navel man the same : thy mystery
Absorbs his soul ; he rises, wanes, as thou :
The dawn, the noonday, eve and night, but seem
To mark the hours upon his dial'd life !
Yea, he expands in soul until he sits
Enthroned above his mortal self, and views
His shrivelling clay pass with the tottering earth,
And learns the highest of philosophies
As whispered by the secret voice within !
Soft day-dawn—poetry of light and hope—
Thou oracle of God—thou glass of Truth—
How oft have I gazed on thy pearly beam
And envied thee thy fair serenity
And power to fold the curtain of my night
For ever back into oblivious space,
As I so gaze again upon thee now !
How, too, have I, with eyes of anguish, viewed
The purpled East suffuse in thy pure light
(As did the lily change to virgin white
From purple, by fair Juno's drop of milk)
And longed that I could plunge my mind's deep stain
Within such alchemising hallowedness !
Fain would I brush these whitening locks of mine
From off my nighted brow with such sweet ease

As thou throw'st back the vapours o'er the hill !
The Virgin must have dyed her violet robe
Within thy chaste, cerulean-coloured beam.
Aurora, thou'rt all-glorious and divine !
Thy fingers, whence the jewelled lightnings flash,
Ope soft the gates of day and pour the dew
Benign upon the servile, barren earth.
The night, and sleep, the constellations, all
Flee from thy rosy chariot and bright steeds
Illumed and shot with crystals from thy crown.
Thou art the preacher unto humankind—
Brief, true, and less corrupt than hireling earth's.
Ah, yea, the master-poet thou to sing
The glories and magnificence of God !
Thou janitor of Heaven, who hold'st its Door
Ajar for us (though with dim mortal sight)
To view the beauties, excellence, of Power !
Our gazing souls imbibe a purity,
And in their new virginity are drawn
From their foul fetters of the flesh to Bliss !
Prostrated on dark earth, how I have grieved
To think thou art all this and canst perform
So much, but yet the midnight of my mind
Canst not dispel or soothe it with thy dew !
My mental night a deeper, darker tint
Of purple wears than all the Tyrian dyes !
Alas, there is no dew—within, without—
Which *now* can give its virtue to my soul !
I shook the fructifying dew-drop off
Mine early life, so it must wither now !
I spurned the balm which would have me preserved !
Polycrates his rarest jewel threw
Away,—I scorned a richer one than his !
Ay, *she* was more to me—was all—was life !
And yet, I cannot further weep,—the fount
Of tears desiccate hath been long from use
(But this I feel ashamed of bitterly,
For e'en Apollo's Cumæan statue wept),—
My heart hath throbb'd itself so oft with grief
That now, as Niobe, it is a stone

(Which, were I as Rome's peasant-emperor,
 I'd break, as Maximinus harder broke ;
 But, like her hapless shepherd-monarch, the
 Maximianus Second, I endure
 A killing plague, though mine lacks his effect !).
 My heart is ashes more than Solomon
 Himself could form a notion of to-day.
 Yet doth my heart, of wakened, burning love,
 Yield for *her* memory a scroll beyond
 The luxury and preciousness which lit
 In gorgeous beauty th'ancient Arabs' and
 The Persians' scripts (hearts pass the pens of man !).
 In keen despair, I'll seek the Spirit of
 The Waterfall and haply solace find. [*He exits.*]

SCENE II.—*The Waterfall.*

Divers SPIRITS appear through the spray, and sing in chorus.—The night is past,—
 Day comes at last
 And with it joy, and light, and life,
 Dispelling gloom on earth so rife.
 How beautiful
 And dutiful
 The sun is, who peeps o'er the hill
 In bliss !
 He bends not to the human will ;
 No sceptre sways
 His burning rays,—
 He reigns
 And deigns
 To only rule the fairest day,
 And give the queen of night a ray
 And kiss
 Of chastest love
 Ne'er to remove.
 See,
 He
 Brighter grows, and drives the clouds
 That would'act as deathful shrouds

To his lustre,
 As a cluster
 E'en of meteors hid till morn
 In her breast
 Folded them from vapour's scorn,
 And caressed
 Those lamps of night,
 Like babes in fright
 Wrapt in the arms,
 Free from alarms,
 To mother's heart
 Whose beating is their cradle soft
 And warm :
 No storm
 Is there for them, but for *her* oft—
 'Tis mother's part.
 The mists are fleeing,
 Apollo seeing,
 And are agreeing
 On their fast being
 Dissolved.
 Resolved
 On this,
 They vanish to transparent air,
 And, like the clouds, abide
 In sightless place and lodging bare,
 And from the sunshine hide.
 Oh, bliss !
 He reigns in azure robe ;
 The mountain is his stool ;
 His empire is the globe ;
 Man is his courtly fool ;
 His crown, concentrated light ;
 His sceptre, lightning stroke
 Which brilliance doth ignite,
 And splendour doth evoke.
 He smiles—
 Beguiles
 Woe into joy ;
 And life's annoy

So strange
Doth change.
He lends the rain a gorgeous cloak
Bejewelled with celestial tints :
He rives the tempests with a stroke,
And doth his majesty evince
In all things ;
All the elements
Create ;
Makes commandments
For earth's kings
Their state
Is transient, mocking, too ;
Their sceptre frail ;
Their
Laws all time shall eschew ;
Themselves shall hail
Death's sovereignty,
And they shall be
Bare,—
Divested of
Their clayish pomp :
Their purple off,
They greet the trump
(Joined hand
In hand
With peasants, beggars, serfs and slaves,
Who rise
Likewise
To learn their doom beyond their graves)
Th'archangel must,
To raise their dust,
Hereafter sound in awe ;
Whose echo shall
All space enthrall,—
Creation shall be uncreated then
And Chaos ope his maw
Consuming it, ne'er to be seen again.
But the sun
Shall have run

His brilliant and sure course
 E'en when
 Again
The world groweth worse,
And the Maker of all
 Lights its last funeral pyre,
And the good doth recall
 He in man did inspire.
These waters dash down
 The jewels of light—
 Their lustre so bright
No minerals own ;
For *these* are the gems
 Which model the earth's
 And give them their births :
E'en kings' diadems,
 With their stones from the ground,
 Never splendour have found
 Which excel
These beautiful hues
(Which rainbows all choose
As models of tints
And most sublime prints)
 That here dwell.
The sun, in his majesty, strikes
 More hot with his sceptre of beam
As to his meridian he strikes
 Through azure to more brightly gleam.
 His bed
 Made of soft air
 In the West there
When evening shall gather
With night, and together
 Silence the world
 Till they have furled
 In peace the winds,
 In rest all kinds
 Of wings,
 And things

Have silenced
Late violenced,
For the king of light
Reposeth on night
His head.

What a texture his pillow possesses—
What a beautiful crimson him dresses,

As on his glorious couch,
Far from profaning earth,
He slumbers ! Stars avouch
Their reverential mirth

By burning vestal fires
At his transcendent shrine ;
And angels light those pyres,
Whose purity combine.

All hail to the light
Of day and of night,—
To the azure of day

And the night's purple ray,—
To the matins of birds and of flowers,
And their vespers, their slumbering-bowers !
Let the earth with one voice—
All creation—rejoice——

Enter ANSELMO.

ANS. (*interrupting*).—At what, ye insubstantial things
who know

Naught of the human state, nor can, from your
Fantastic knowledge, read the mortal brow ?

If ye could but peruse such faithful book,
Writ by the changing hand of Time, ye'd read
The deep impressèd ciphers of despair !

FIRST SPIRIT.—Thou rude, intruding mortal, I do know
Thee well, and for a magian powerful
And——

ANS.—Fatal !

FIRST SPIRIT.—As Medusa's petrous gaze !

Thou, by the cunning of accursèd art,
Canst plunge into the vaulted spirit-world,
And from its vast profundity of thought
Canst swell thy mortal mind by a discourse

With its inspiring union, which the stars
 Themselves are ignorant all of, though they
 Emblazon the futurity of man,
 And are in their own essences the lamps
 Which light the souls of recreant mortals to
 Their home eterne,—each twinkling cadence of
 Their fire marks rapidly the earthly flight
 Of myriad rushing men to that last space
 Where ages in infinity unroll
 The long, interminable æons of
 Eternity ! Such souls shall later see
 Each firmament, each star, each universe,
 Each power, in the great balance tremble and
 Fall from their all-celestial altitude
 In withering particles to lapse into
 The chaos of the pre-created spheres,
 Whilst they themselves, the godhead attributes,
 Shall, like the ether of perpetual heaven
 Whereof they are the tissue, aye survive—
 Fixed tenants of unfathomable gulfs
 Recurrent in untimed infinity !

ANS.—But *all* souls have no post-existence, nymph ?

FIRST SPIRIT.—Thine earthly scientists confute thee.

More :

When HE, Prometheus' Great Prometheus, formed
 The primal man, HE kindled him with life
 By breathing in the clayish trunk HIS own
 Constituent Vital Air ; so mortals must
 Retain beyond the grave immortal life
 Consistent in them as the deathless part
 Of Adam's Maker,—HE's eternal, so
 Th'imparted Attribute, or Element,
 Of HIM must wear co-immortality.

ANS.—HE told mankind's progenitors that they
 Should " surely die " : hath HE, then, power to
 Control—yea, make and unmake—essence which
 Imbues HIMSELF with immortality
 Not dial'd on the sun ?

FIRST SPIRIT. " Death " in that sense,
 Is not extinction of man's super-self,

But sojourn in Gehenna's night eterne—
That "second death" both Testaments affirm :
(Ezekiel, Hosea, David, and Saints John
And Matthew).

ANS. But if Jesus' Passion did

Alone afford atonement unto man,
Must all the souls of pious Jews be lost ?

FIRST SPIRIT.—Saint Paul, the Jew-Apostle, warned the
old

Galatians that the Gospel preached by him
Was *not of man* but was revealed by Christ ;
That man was justified not by the law,
But only in the faith of Jesus Christ.

And to themselves the Hebrews Paul explained
That all their righteous patriarchs of old
"Died in the faith," and saw God's promises
Prophetically "from afar."

Thus they become co-heirs with Christians.
Christ hath become the "ending of the law,"
The law our "schoolmaster to guide to Christ."

ANS.—Are souls of Gentiles lost who passed before
Golgotha's WORD emancipated them ?

FIRST SPIRIT.—The same Apostle's First Epistle to
The Thessalonians saith the Christians shall
Precede not those who "in the Faith have died."

ANS.—But did not even David—prophet, king,
Ancestor too of Jesus Christ Himself—
Receive reward at death and enter bliss ?

FIRST SPIRIT.—Paul, as recorded in the *Acts*, declared
To the Judæans that e'en David "had
To Heaven not yet ascended," though he knew
God's oath to raise from him the Saviour-Christ.

ANS.—Had *no* man, e'en though pious, gone to Heaven
E'er Calvary lit his immortal torch ?

FIRST SPIRIT.—Saint John informs thee "NO *man yet*
hath soared

To Heaven but Christ."

Rewards to man are given

At Judgment ; when, as John Divine revealed
At Patmos, is "the time" for all the dead—

“ The saints and *all* of them that fear God’s name ” ;
Or, in Saint Paul’s own words inspired : “ The *time*
Of restitution of all things, which God

Hath spoke through prophets since the world began.”
ANS.—But can the heathen, savage, mindless wretch,
Share in the Christian’s Paradise beyond ?

FIRST SPIRIT.—God swore to Abraham : “ In thine own
seed

Shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ” :
And, as Saint Paul declares : “ *which seed is Christ.*”
The Lord Himself said : “ I shall give to thee,
My Son, the heathen for inheritance.”

The Psalmist sings : “ All the world’s ends shall turn
Unto the Lord, for his the kingdom is ” ;

Again : “ He hath dominion from sea
To sea and to the utmost ends of earth.”

And Daniel, in prophetic vision, saith :

“ There then was given him (the Son of man)

Dominion, that *all* people, nations, and

E’en languages should serve Him.” And St. Luke :

“ The crookèd shall be straightened, rough made
smooth.”

ANS.—Yea, Spirit, but do these great promises

In *certainty* include the wretches of

Humanity whom I have spoken of,

Or do they only *converts* reach ?

FIRST SPIRIT.—The Psalmist comprehends ALL creatures
when

He plainly singeth : “ He shall judge among
The heathen.” And : “ He shall *with righteousness*
Thy people judge, thy *poor* with judgment too.

The mountains shall *by righteousness* bring peace
To people ALL.” God says : “ I’ll *rightly* judge ” ;

And that : “ I’ll judge *according to thy ways.*”

Let me commend thee, finally, unto

Th’Apostle’s declaration that : “ ALL FLESH
Shall God’s salvation see.” And David’s song :

“ Thy way is in the sea, in waters great

Thy path, thy footsteps also are unknown.”

ANS.—How vainly Eve th’Edenic apple plucked,—

How dark the sermon which the Serpent preached !
 But, Spirit, be thou still my Hermes, and
 Translate more words which unto many a soul
 Prove each a Sphinx, Charybdis, Scylla, and
 Indeed to Christians, too, Medusa's eye !
 Yea, e'en the wise have o'er them stumbled oft,
 And begged some Cerean torch to light their way :
 Whilst mental runners, too, lost in the maze,
 Have prayed in vain for Ariadne's thread !

FIRST SPIRIT.—Speak, mortal, and I'll try to answer thee.

ANS.—The Great Physician told the doctors of
 The law, that all man's sins and blasphemies
 Should be forgiven save blasphemies alone
 Against the Holy Ghost—man *then* is damned !

FIRST SPIRIT.—“ Blaspheme,” in that sense, meaneth
 “ to renounce,”

Or “ to reject,” “ to spurn,” the Holy Ghost
 (Which, in Its turn, means Spirit, grace, of God)
 By *Christians* who are so already—those
 Who *then*, as Paul informed the Hebrews once,
 RE-CRUCIFY IN SHAME THEIR SAVIOUR.

Thou shouldst believe, not “ stumble at the word,”
 As Peter the Apostle to the strangers wrote.

ANS.—What mysteries the heavens and earth secrete !
 Oh, man, let death efface thee in the grave,
 For life but makes of thee earth's greatest fool,
 And Truth wears many masks !

FIRST SPIRIT. “ Truth ” ?

Pilate once
 Asked the Great Master what it was, and thou
 Dost ask it now.

ANS. Not I, but all the world,
 Ask, and repeat, and echo, Pilate's quest !

FIRST SPIRIT.—He little thought that TRUTH before him
 stood,—

That he was asking but of “ Truth ” the “ Truth ” !
 The Ruler of a greater world than Rome—
 The Master of the Cæsars of the Earth,—
 Hath said : “ *I* am the TRUTH.” As John explains :

“ The law through Moses came, but *truth* through Christ.”

Content thyself to know it is a Voice
Of which the human soul an echo makes.
Above the seas of blood, the broken hearts,
Kin's severed ties, lost mortal friendships ; and
Beyond the rage, the passion, favour, fear,
Of savage, heathen, Christian, king and serf ;
Immortal o'er the crumbling sects of earth ;
This Voice is Sublimate of each and all,—
Yea, *this*, oh man, is TRUTH !

ANS. I've still a cloud.

The Bible tells us of *two* “ Saviours ”—God
And also Son : that we must both “ believe
On Christ,” and “ do the Father's will,” and live.
Will, then, the keeping of the Ten Commands
And exercising ethic duty to
The Father make a saving substitute
For simple faith on Jesus Christ the Son ?
I pause at two cross-roads, lost on my way.

FIRST SPIRIT.—Christ stands the “ WILL ” Expressed of
God, Who sent

“ His one begotten Son that who in Him believes
Shall die not but have everlasting life.”

ANS.—Our preachers, then, should make it clearer to
The darkened sinner's mind—the risk is *theirs* !
Man's knowledge is a twofold one—arcane,
Or spiritual, which needs interpreters ;
The other, common life's experience.
Lost thus, in mystery and maze profound,
By thoughts e'er baffled, and but finding in
One's errors highest wisdom of mankind,
We're mocked by very life !

FIRST SPIRIT. Thy mind (as that
Of e'en philosophers of piety)
Too mortal and too carnal is to reach
The mysteries of *the* Invisible
Who dwells superlatively High—far, far
Beyond our re-ascending purple air,
Where wizards' science, charms of sorcerers,

And all intelligencies of the earth
In miserable effort fail to reach ;
And their endeavours of ambition to
But comprehend such mighty PRINCIPLE;
Shrink back again to base mortality !
E'en godlike man in his brief, clogging flesh,
Essaying to conjecture such deep things,
Is dashed e'er back to the profoundest gulf
Of dim and dense, unfathomable thought !

ANS.—And yet the sage Porphyrius of Tyre
Deemed Magic study a divine assay.

FIRST SPIRIT.—So Saturn “ deemed ” himself superior
to

Celestial Jupiter, and he was lost.
Philosophy should teach man ne'er to “ deem.”

ANS.—And Zoroaster's Magic was divine :
Nay, more ; he prophesied Christ's Saving Birth.
Yea, with their mystic key the magians find
The sacred Trinity and creed of Faith.
The key unto St. John's Apocalypse,
And to Ezekiel's Vision, Solomon's
Profoundest wisdom, to the Bible all,
Is Magic. Yea, it opes the sepulchres
Of buried æons, gives the dead a tongue,
Embalms and sanctifies all sanctuaries.
E'en Christianity would perish soon
Without its Esoteric fundament.
The Occultists plead, too, in number strong.
E'en by their very art do they profess
Divine and human sciences to all translate.
And did Hierocles not state the miracles
Of Apollonius Tyanensis show
As equal to the ones of Jesus Christ ?

FIRST SPIRIT.—Lactantius and Eusebius did confute
Hierocles' profane and idle pen.

ANS.—But Philalethes (Brecknock's reverend
And learned, famous mystic) hath declared
That Magic's source evolved from God Himself.
Apuleius, too, a master-magus, urged
That Magic was the handmaid e'en of Heaven.

- And Abra-Melin proved its holiness ;
 Conversed with angels by its aid, and showed
 'Twas but God's gift to Moses, Aaron, and
 To David, Jacob, Solomon, the Saints,
 The Patriarchs, and Prophets—greatly wise.
 We're told no science yields a stronger proof
 Of Christ's divinity than Magic doth.
 Nay, Jesus Christ Himself is hailed to-day
 As Master-Magian, Chief Initiate, Who,
 The Talmud states, in Egypt Magic learnt :
 His own Apostles ; also Saints ; Divines,
 And holy men, have traced their Heavenly steps
 In Esoteric pathways dim but sure.
 And Orpheus—great in Magic's mysteries—
 Was even by St. Justin Martyr deemed
 As good authority as Moses was.
 And Orpheus prophesied of Christ (as did
 The Sibyls, Hermes too) Augustine saith.
 Yea, Christian art made Orpheus type of Christ,
 And borrowed symbols Pagans did invent.
 Christ unified e'en Bacchus' cipher, " IHS " ;
 Their Eucharists were duplicated, too :
 And e'en their very names were synonyms.
 'Twas Magi first who worshipped Christ the Babe.
- FIRST SPIRIT.—I would remind thee of the caution of
 Thine own authorities in magic skilled.
 Remember what th'Apostate, too, declared
 (He who had blotted out Christ's holy Name
 From the labarum of his pagan throne—
 Rome's mighty emperor) with his last breath :
 " Oh, Galilean, *Thou* hast conquered now ! "
- ANS.—The origin of e'en the sacred Cross
 Is lost in darkest, dense, antiquity—
 Years numbering thousands ere the birth of Christ :
 The Gospels, Creed, are esoteric, too.
 E'en virgin birth to others legend gives ;
 And Science also to the lowest life.
- FIRST SPIRIT.—But, hasty man, I would refer thee to
 One witness from the rest thou hast invoked,
 And who reminds thee that the Church but loaned

The pagan arts to teach those Pagans Truth.
Remember, also, what the Tarsian Saint
Preached to the Pagans once : “ Whom therefore ye
Thus ignorantly worship, Him declare
I unto you.”

Man e'er remains a child.

ANS.—The Fathers of the Church claimed Plato as
A Christian ere Christ's advent : Clement, too,
Declared the Gospel as perfection e'en
Of Platonism.

FIRST SPIRIT. Plato gathered truths
Prophetical in Egypt where he went,
And from the Jews learnt much, and doubtless, too,
Conversed with Nehemiah, Malachi.
God even sent a Plato as a torch.
Like Habib in the Eastern fable, thou
Canst draw aside the mystic curtain, but
Save the great PRINCIPLE aught else canst see.

ANS.—Yea, Spirit, but like that Arabian prince,
I've lost the key of all my destinies,
Since *she*—the pilot of my happiness—
Hath vanished from my too unfaithful grasp !

FIRST SPIRIT.—Seek thou another,—thou hast youth
and power.

ANS.—When France's Cæsar at red Waterloo
Gazed tearful on his fleeting martial world,
His false ambition's genius (like thyself)
Said : “ Seek another ” ; but his Fate cried out :
“ Too late ! ” That Corsican's event is mine,
For I have lost my concrete world in *her*,
With greater grief than thus Napoleon felt.
Great Alexander wept because a new
World would expand not to still humour him :
The tears of Macedonia's monarch but
Anticipated mine for fairier “ world.”
Sennacherib, who lost Jerusalem
And all his mighty legions, knew not how
To suffer loss ; and I could tutor him.
I, too, could teach Achilles deeper grief
Than that he felt o'er brave Patroclus' corse,

- And o'er Penthesilea's beauteous clay :
 Or that which Artaxerxes knew for his
 Brave Teridates : or the poignant pang
 Which Artemisia carried in her breast :
 Or than the scalding drops which Philip's son
 Wept over breathless Clitus at his feet.
 Yea, lesser grief felt Israel's poet-king
 For Absalom, who would exchange the death !
 My tearful flood would shame fair Mantos' lake !
 And Hecuba and Niobe felt less
 The thorn of sorrow than this heart of mine !
 The Koran states of woman only four
 Were perfect ; but my loved one was their mould !
 Canst thou not see translated on this brow
 Unusual sorrow than pertains to man ?
- FIRST SPIRIT.—Alas ! I pity thee. So young, so fair
 In lineaments (which intimate a state
 Above thy barren garb and wilder gaze).
- ANS.—Reserve thy pity for the horde of men
 Who grovel for existence in the world,
 And not for me who am exempt from them.
 I am the lonely upas of mankind
 That breathes ethereal death around to all
 Who venture in the poison's current near !
 My "lineaments" ? The sculptured statue speaks
 The eloquence of beauty, yet 'tis stone.
 My habitation suits my mind, my soul :
 The filthy vulture preys upon the plain—
 The eagle makes his home among the rocks.
- FIRST SPIRIT.—Hast thou not sought that Being most
 supreme
 Who moulded us in air, and made the world
 With all its elements, and, therefore, thee ?
 Canst thou not solace find beyond thy skill
 Which little helped its sires, the old Chaldees ?
- ANS.—What prayers, what vigils, or what penance
 great,
 Can wipe remembrance of a bitter deed
 From off the living mind ? How rase the thoughts
 Which are the kindlers of the very soul ?

Forgetfulness—oblivion vast and deep—
 Is what I long have panted for in vain !
 Charmadas, Cineas too, compared with me
 Could recollect but dimly in this cause,
 Mnemosyne would, too, renounce her power.
 Oh, could I tear from out my memory's book
 The bold-typed leaf, I'd read the rest in bliss !
 We cannot purify the tainted brook
 By cleansing still its current as it flows,
 But penetrate its fountain-rock and change
 Its spring and new-create the element.
 Prayers, vigils, penance, then, avail not me !
 How true what Omar Khayyám sang of old :
 " We cannot cancel what Fate's finger writes ! "

Mine only fitting prayers have been like those
 Of Tenes and Althæmenes unto
 The gods, that *I* be swallowed up by earth !
 And how I envy those whose fate was kind
 To them the same—Antonius Polemon,
 Amphiaraus, and Hermithea, and
 Swift Baton ! But I'm doomed myself to wait !
 My vigils are more constant than the light,
 For all day long my faithful mind doth watch,
 And through the night mine eyes invert within.
 My penance is unceasing, for do I
 Not every passing hour prostrate this clay
 Among the flints and worms in my lone cell ?
 Have I not, also, cursed my natal hour
 More passionately and more frequent than
 The exiled Ovid, grievous Job, and she
 Whose charms wrecked Troy and brought their
 owner tears ?

All—all these practices I have pursued,
 But still my soul, like Noah's roaming bird,
 Hath vainly buffeted the tempest and
 Re-crossed the waves to lodge in its first home !

FIRST SPIRIT.—Yet, though thy heart is *evil from its youth*
 (As HE once said of thy first race) thou canst
 Be turned into a newer man, and have
 Another heart to beat with holier pulse.

ANS.—But for how long ? Two years ?

Such was the time

Israel's first king (changed as thou seem'st to hint)
Was doomed to reign with piety within.

FIRST SPIRIT.—But, erring mortal, railing man, he fell
From lack of faith and disobedience ; yet
Was reinstated into grace.

ANS. Still, he

But had a *limit new* of Godly grace.
I want new *thoughts*, or death to kill their nest !
Mine infancy was full of promise, but
Like th'almond tree I showed the earliest bloom
Of all the others, yet yield fruit the last :
Not like the mulberry that gives its fruit
In luscious plenty ere the leaf appears.
Wise Sadi truthful sang—the nature of
All things survives the conflict of aught else.
“ Man was not made for true felicity ” :
Grave Sophocles, ne'er didst thou sweeter sing !

FIRST SPIRIT.—Alas, I fear thou art that root which
bear'st

The gall and wormwood 'mongst mankind !

ANS.

I am :

Paul, Moses too, were right in metaphor.
Confucius, China's sage, spoke, also, truth :
“ Man is a blade, no bloom ; else bloom, no fruit.”
And as a weed within a garden fair,
I long—but long in vain—to be plucked out !
Yea, I am that black floral hellebore
Which e'en in winter's snow and ice survives :
Or, the Siberian sow-thistle that dreads
The sun, and blooms 'neath only clouds and frost :
Yea, the ice-plant on arid rocks in Greece—
An icicle unmelted by the sun.
I cannot e'en command one latent bud
Such as the century-plant so tardy shows.
Thou canst not say why Evil should be sent
To mar what earthly heaven a man can make.

FIRST SPIRIT.—Recalcitrant and faithless soul, be-
think

What Hippo's bishop taught ; what Esdras saith ;
The ancient sage ; the modern scientist :
Yea, what thine own mere magic doth reveal.

ANS.—What doctrines, dogmas, creeds, or tongues, or
pens,

Will change the hardened reason, or excuse
The soul condemned, or blot the scroll of Fate ?

FIRST SPIRIT.—Thou wretched mortal, canst thou not
trace out

In all this beauteous world and nature fair,
One sweet oasis for thy feet—just one ?

ANS.—Ay, one would be sufficient for my peace,—
As was the herald-leaf to Noah, which

Conveyed to him a world of bloom and scent !

FIRST SPIRIT.—Can I not aid thee in thy quest ?

ANS. 'Tis vain.

I thank thee.

When the world was lost by flood,

What did remain ?

FIRST SPIRIT. But tempests and

Wild desolation.

ANS. What when tempests ceased ?

FIRST SPIRIT.—But ruin, and a barren earth.

ANS. Thus I !

My world was likewise lost—is likewise found :

She was my world—my life—my heaven,—I'm earth !

FIRST SPIRIT.—Again I would refer thee to thy God—

He Who by but a word called forth from naught

The splendid heavens, the fruitful earth, and e'en

Proud, godlike man who lives eternally.

ANS.—But Agathon hath said that Deity

Itself is impotent and circumscribed :

And this doth Aristotle verify,

Supported, too, by modern scientists.

FIRST SPIRIT.—Thou impious wretch, dost thou not call
to mind

What Uriel the holy messenger

Spake unto Esdras on such things ? And e'en

Thy science-witness states his science vain.

The heathen groped in darkness—thou hast light.

ANS.—I'm past the aid of God or man !

FIRST SPIRIT.

Alas !

Art sure I——

ANS. But dismiss thy sisters hence,—

Their sight is like that of pure snowdrops fair

Around a grave—I chill their bloom !

FIRST SPIRIT (*to the others, and singing*).—Go, sisters,
go :

I here must know

This mortal's woe

And sorrow's throe.

I'll join ye soon in our bright home

Beyond the vapour of this foam ;

For all's amiss

And void of bliss

In land like this

Where ruin is.

We'll meet

Most soon :

I'll greet

E'er noon

Your company

And sing a glee

Among the dazzling emerald rocks

Where crystal streams more beauteous fall,

Unspoiled by earthquakes' foreign shocks ;

And deck our hair with pearls for all.

Adieu

To you !

The other SPIRITS (in chorus).—Sister, we obey thy wish,

And will hasten to our dell,

Where, in majesty, doth dwell

Beauty which none can dispel ;

And from out its many a shell

Forth the mother-pearl impel ;

And bathe in the waters' swell ;

And from out its crystal cell

Find a charm to break the spell

Of thine absence

With the essence

Which doth us impoverish.

Adieu !

We will wait

At the gate

Of agate

For you.

[They disappear through the spray.]

ANS.

How such

Rich strains of melody grate on my soul,

And echo sadly in my caverned life !

FIRST SPIRIT.—But music wakes the heart, and new-creates

The soul—gives man a stepping-stone to thoughts

Which wing themselves through nature to its God.

Yea, thine own Magic teacheth that a man

Is e'en a harmony 'twixt earth and Heaven.

ANS.—If that the strains can from this chaos build

A newer structure, let them, oh, float on !

But, Spirit, there's no power on earth can call

From out its sepulchre of vaulted thought,

The soul there buried as a suicide !

SPIRIT.—But all men are not so ; then, why thyself ?

Remember what sang Sophocles : “ For know,

The worst of ills, if rightly used, may prove

The means of happiness.” Then, make amends.

ANS.—I've, with Theognis, failed to solve the knot

Of why the proud, the bad, th'unjust, succeed

And prosper, whilst the good are doomed to bear.

E'en Seneca was critical in this ;

And Tacitus, and Cicero, the same ;

And also the Acquinian Satirist.

SPIRIT.—Isocrates and Plato both reply,

And Hesiod ; with more pens and tongues the same :

Thy Scriptures, too, are thine abiding balm.

ANS.—A music-note doth leave its echo sweet

Within the foliaged and retentive grove ;

But o'er the sea, the note dies with the sound—

The waves' acoustics tumble all alone.

Thy words are harmonies, but all are lost

Within the surging ocean of my breast !

SPIRIT.—If thou wert man—no more or less—there
might

Be hope for thee : but I know well thy power,
Thy superhuman skill, the magic charm
Which fetters me and mine to thy command.

ANS.—That calls my mind unto its purpose.

I

Came here to meet thee and to ask that thou
Call *her* from out the uncongenial tomb,
That once—if only once—again these eyes
May view the form which fountained all my joy !

SPIRIT.—This is not in my province. I could grant
What boon thou askedst else,—call up those of
A higher order and of greater power ;
Or be ambassadress for thee unto
Great Jupiter in a momentous suit.

ANS.—Thou dost forget,—thine embassage to him
Were needless in a cause of mine ; my power
Can place me in his thronèd sight.

SPIRIT. 'Tis true.

ANS.—Thou canst not aid me, Spirit ; so may'st
go.

SPIRIT.—And yet, if only for thy youth, I'd try—

ANS.—*Post-dated* youth and bloom bid thee dissolve !

[*The SPIRIT vanishes in the spray.*]

What sponge from out the ocean vast can dry
The tears exhaled by bitterness of soul,
Or what blest hand can blot from memory's page
The hearted grief in burning symbols writ ?
We are the playthings of cool, captious chance,
And servitors to changing freaks of Time.
Our little day of sunshine hath its eve,
And oft the night doth show no star to us.
Hope is our passport to possess our joys,
But oft within the winds the scroll is lost.
I'll call the chiefest Spirit of this place :
Perchance her higher power will grant my wish.—
Thou Nymph, who art the chiefest of the rest
Whose airy forms, like thine, dwell in the space
Defined by this majestic cataract,

I call thee, by this magic sign, at once
To do the wishes of a blighted man.
Appear !

THE NYMPH OF THE WATERFALL *rises from the spray.*

Celestial form (for thou art such
To *me* at least), thy flowing hair, spun from
The raven's down, is affluent in curls
Upon thy shoulder (ivoried more white
Than Pelops' was, or Venus Praxis' at
Rich Megara) like tressèd jet which mates
The virgin purity of that warm snow,
Bright as the pearl of Heaven's glittering Gate,
And moulded in a Niphean snow-flake soft.
Some Carian nymph, with rosy tint divine,
Hath to thine ivory heaven's blush transferred.
Thou couldst a lily unto Judith lend
To make diviner her pure loveliness.
Thine eyes of amber softly dazzle, like
The rich Heliadean tears ; or like
The hallowed lustre of spring's setting sun
When floating o'er a sea of opal pure :
Like Africa's black diamonds, they throw
A starry glory when all else is night.
'Tis said that Berenice's hair in heaven
Was made a constellation : sure, thine own,
Which spreads a bright aurora in its night,
Assumes no less a gloss empyreal.
There shot from Matradeva's radial brow
An eye—the third—whose flame was as the sun :
But from thine own the Hindu's learnt to burn.
Thou must be that lost Pleiad from the sky—
Old Atlas' radiant, esoteric child ;
Or star-transformèd Cynosura ; or
Meek Merope who strays from heaven to earth ;
Or Phosfor lighting day's first lamp in heaven.
The asterism which blazed in the sky
At Buddha's birth, its matrix had in thee ;
Th'obsequious, heavenly torch of Cæsar, too.
Menippe and Antioche from death
Arose as stars and wore a crown in heaven :

Thy glittering presence surely lent them light.
Fair Phryne's charms, so eloquent, reversed
Her doom ; but thine pleads with seraphic force.
The chastened light within thy dazzling eye
Might Luna's crescent have illumed the more :
It might re-light humanity's lost eye.
Euchides would have snatched the sacred fire
Whose home thine eye provides, had he beheld
Its wonder—not the ruder Delphian spark.
Yea, in thine eye the Lemnian fire survives,—
'Twould add a splendour to Achilles' shield,—
All the philosophies of nature shine
Translated cunningly and true therein ;
And human mysteries dissolve within
That blinding key, which magic Sibyls forged.
Prometheus' spark would pale beside thine own,
For his was stolen from a dimmer heaven.
When mighty Jove bereaved the earth of fire
'Twas surely but to mingle it with heaven's
And form the mould of thy bright vision's flame.
When Vesta's sacred fire failed in its light
'Tis said Æmylia with her veil re-lit
The votive beam ; but, oh, the molten torch
Which animates thine eye would kindled have
That vestal lamp with holier, brighter flame !
Thine optic-sparkle, too, would light the moon
Of triple splendour on Alcmene's brow.
Yea, that mesmeric light of thine advised
Th' Arcadian asbestos, in secrecy,
How to maintain immortal brilliance.
The lamp which lights the Moslem's seven heavens
Had its divine ignition from thine eye.
The dark beam of the twofold sacred light
Occultly gave thy glance its blessed birth.
That burning spark of thine empyreal soul
Illumes the lamp the holy Magians burn
When wooing light's own Essence born in Heaven.
Cos' silkworms must have laboured thus to spin
Thy raiment of white beauty and so soft ;
And deft Acesas used his chiefest skill.

Thou art so radiant in thy fairness, thou
Must be one of the stars in Clotho's crown ;
Or one of those which glittered o'er the head
Of Castor and of Pollux. Nay, perchance,
Thou art thyself Cassiope, stept down
From heaven with all thy thirteen brilliant stars.
When Gordianus reigned, some stars shone forth
As proxies for the noonday sun eclipsed :
Sure thou wast one of those bright deputies.
Urania decks her azure robe with thee ;
And Lachesis her brilliant raiment, too ; so doth
Lucifera her heavenly, dazzling veil,—
Like Nox, thou hast the constellations for
Thy radiant guides to light thy steps to heaven.
Thy soft volcanic eye must e'en have bred
Those seven stars which holy Enoch saw.
More heavenly safety lies beneath thy glance
Than could be found from the Osirian Eye.
So shone the queen of heaven's blessed eye
When she within black marble deigned to rest.
Thy rich vermilion-tinted cheek bestowed
The pattern-blush Aspasia tried to steal.
More beauteous is thy blush than that red tint
Which perfected queen Esther's loveliness :
And beautier than Lavinia's crimson cheek.
Thy whiter and more pure rufescent blush
Create the Alpine loveliness and bloom.
Some arch-nymph dipped her cunning brush within
The chaste vermilion from the parent mine
Of some sublime Sisapo, touching thee.
Thy cheek doth lend the Pæstean rose its blush :
Yea, 'tis the dye which gilds the Alpine snow
In summer's crimson sunset, which so near
To heav'n is that the bleached brow
Is tinted with an angel-hand divine.
Thou art the rainbow's dazzling ray of white
Xenophanes and Aristotle missed.
Less sumptuous in her charms Súdaveh shone.
And less seraphic Kaid's daughter showed :
Tahmíneh's eyes reflected heaven's light

Less brightly, and less dimmed the wondering stars
(Firdausi's visions must have been thyself).
Thou verily art that great masterpiece
The Hindu poet sang of long ago
In *Ramayana*, as Creation's best.
When Reni was inspired to limn the face
Of his divine Madonna, thy fair form
Appeared before his scenic eye, and he
With his creative brush translated it,
But could discern not, with his mortal eye,
The added halo flitting o'er the brow
Drawn on his eloquent, illusioned cloth.
With Plato's wished-for thousand heavenly eyes
I'd gaze eterne on beauty's mould in thee.
Yea, I would borrow e'en the thousand eyes
Of Chantong, Tibet's polydextrous god.
Thy wavelet mouth is chiselled coral rare,
And on the rainbow doth reflect its tint.
Thy features all were sculptured (but by no
Profaning human Phidias) in the glow
Of placid moonlight, and in marble from
Some heavenly Marpessus angels guard.
But that thine eye and bosom glow with life,
Thou mightst have seemed the Cnidean Venus in
Her whitest marble as the paragon
Of all the labours of Praxiteles.
Parrhasius' brush were impotent to give
A second life to that thou ownest now ;
And Zeuxis' art would still degenerate
To things incapable of life ; and e'en
Would Polygnotus all his paints ignore.
Praxiteles would throw his chisel down,
And so would Agesander of Rhodes.
Lycaste, ay and Hiera, would hide,
And deem thy shadow beautier than themselves.
Thou must have been the model for the brush
(And not Campaspe) of Apelles when
He limned the thousand charms which Venus wore
While gushing forth to life from out the foam.
The polar star is thy parhelion.

Yea, thou art shepherdess of light and love.
I've called thee, beauteous being, from thy home
In ultra regions (crystall'd by thyself)
To seek thy comfort, aid and sympathy.

NYMPH.—Thou mortal, magian (great as both), I know
Thy state, thy curse, thy fire unquenchable——

ANS.—Nay, 'tis already quenched—a beacon clear
Upon a lonely rock (to warn the good
From their destruction) which hath burned itself
To whitest ashes for the many winds
To wanton with and drop them not to rest !

NYMPH.—I meant thy bosom's fire—ambition's blaze.

ANS.—“ Ambition ” ? What said Alexander to
Diogenes ? That to be so content
Within a narrow space was happier far
Than he himself, of worlds a conqueror.
I've no ambition but from out the earth
To seek the arbour of repose from strife
Of mind,—to find the all-absorbing pool
In which to drown my thoughts,—to find the brush
Of some skilled limner which can change the tint
Deep-dyed upon my soul,—to find the true
And perfect counterpart of *her* dear self
(Which copy ne'er hath been created by
Great Nature's Statuary Himself) ; or if
I could but find a sculptor who could shape
Her cunning semblance with his plastic hand,
I might, like that fond, perfect statuary
Of Cyprus, move fair Venus to fire it
With life : not e'en a Polycletean
Full synod could produce that likeness rare.
The diamond statue fabled Zeyn possessed,
Was nought to him—his *live* ninth was his all.
Such, nymph, is that hot fire which seers my life,
And leaves my soul a wretched after-state—
Not like the holy-burnt, episcopal
Disciple (Polycarpus) of St. John.

NYMPH.—Ambition to excel thy fellow-man
In things beyond the mortal scope, I mean.

ANS.—Thou speakest wiser now.

But, Spirit, I

Would have thee call *her* from the dead, or lay
 Me low with her (for she was my twin soul,
 Which, having flown, hath orphaned me and left
 Me desolate !).

NYMPH. Man hath two souls indeed
 (As thy philosophers and scientists
 Declare) : all nature is but dual, and
 The polar forces sway its attributes—
 Celestial and terrestrial, man and mite.
 But what thou askest is beyond my power.
 It rests with Jupiter to exorcise
 The spirit of thy——

ANS. Hold ! Breathe not that name.
 Like Zeus's bolt, it rives my withered heart,
 And like his thunder, pierceth through my mind !

NYMPH.—I could conduct thee to him ; and could show,
 Upon the way, the worlds beyond thine own,
 If that would give thee added knowledge.

ANS. Then,
 Thou shalt my pilot be to knowledge, Nymph.
 But see thou dost impart it (Eve purloined
 The fruited oracle which told her that
Death was the sum of knowledge) : I know this,
 As her descendant ; so thou canst not teach
 Superior to the One in Eden's school.

NYMPH.—I speak not of divine instruction, but
 Of that which we immortals can impart
 To mortals, such as thou, by leastly our
 Revealing to the human eye the things
 Existing past the curtain of the air.
 I have the power to make thy feet poise thee
 In air as naturally as but now.

ANS.—'Tis well ; we'll view them as we pass along
 Thy hidden realms of space.

Then, pilot, lead

This voyager to Jupiter's domain
 (Perchance in my great desert of despair
 He'll point me to a fount, as he did once
 In Libya to Hercules and hosts.)

The myth Abdelmeleck-Ben-Merouan,
 Damascus' king, pursued a butterfly
 (As white as thou) unto his wish's goal :
I'll follow thee, my guide more real, sure.

NYMPH.—I know *thou'rt* not afraid to face the things
 Which to another would mean awful risk.

ANS.—When weak Amyclas guided Cæsar's ship
 And would put back th'imperial freight while rose
 A storm, the muffled emperor exclaimed :
Cæsarum vehis Cæsarisque fortunam.

With Pompey's conqueror, I answer thee.

NYMPH.—Then, follow me,—thy will shall buoy thee up.
[They disappear together through the waters.]

SCENE III.—*The vacuum of air.*

Enter NYMPH and ANSELMO.

ANS.—We float in purple ether like a night
 All-cloudless on the Earth.

This waste is a
 Pactyica of wealth.

But say, what are
 Those specks of globous light which hang upon
 Th'elastic, distant space like lanterns soft
 Of glow-worms moving with a lazy pace ?

NYMPH.—Such is the story of the universe,—
 A book which makes thy reverent " scientists "
 Fall back in awe, in worship, and in hope :
 And made Theognis, blinded Pagan, see
 With innate eye, and reel in wonderment.

ANS.—Most wonderful and beauteous written page !
 And will the Hand that wrote upon the scroll
 Of ante-Chaos (which god Acmon—born
 With earliest time—made) such emblazoned and
 Live symbols, blot them out hereafter from
 This volume of interminable space
 Clasped by eternal beauty ?

All those worlds—
 Which seem like multi-mirror'd stars within
 A silent lake empurpled by the night,—

Those pebbles which form now our mosaic floor,—
 Those galaxies of worlds, mortal like I,—
 Are doomed ; and all the million millions which
 Inhabit their respective circles, shall
 Be ancillary Nothings—atoms of
 A newer phase of animation in
 Unfathomable, sure Eternity !

NYPH.—Thus Heaven and Hades are peopled.

ANS.

Ay ;

And thus Hades is *over*peopled, too ;
 Thus Earth surcharged with people ; ay, and thus
 Is Heaven depopulated—She who would
 So oft “ have gathered them as doth the hen
 Her chickens ’neath her wing, but they would not.”

NYPH.—And thus Apollyon, Her great foe,
 Retains his trophies in the waging war
 ’Twixt those contending sovereigns of the air—
 The Conqueror and conquered,—Power and power !

ANS.—Infinity ’gainst immortality—

The Maker and unmaker of the vast,
 Innumerable, propagating souls—
 The Architect of Nature’s affluence,
 And its iconoclast,—ay, the sure Herald of
 Th’immortal soul, and its false leader ! Oh,
 Gigantic struggle,—terrible results !
 I am intoxicated at the thought !

NYPH.—And yet thy mind, the sojourner in dust,
 Can comprehend but little past thine Earth.
 Like children gazing upward at the stars,
 Ye mortals linger in amaze at things
 Ye see in vista only, nor can say
 What concentrate intelligencies dwell
 Within each particle divinely shewn :
 The human sense dissolves in wonderment,
 And wonderment subsides in mystery.
 Thy greatest polyhistor is a fool.
 The mortal senses ever clog themselves
 When they attempt to read th’immortal book.

ANS.—Teach *me* to read the smallest page—nay, but
 One letter,—and *I’ll* be content.

NYMPH. This must
Be taught hereafter : death translates in full
The secret symbols traced on th'azure sheet.
The Persian poet was a dunce in this,
Though Socrates says poets are divine ;
Which Plato, Homer, Cicero, confirm ;
And which e'en modern science ratifies.

ANS.—Is Death the only key to knowledge ?

NYMPH. Yea ;
'Tis knowledge in its essence ; it hath no
Phase else—it is superlative.

Dost thou
Not know that wise Democritus declared
His choice to but discover one small cause
Of Nature's subtle and all-secret work,
To even Persia's diadem ?

ANS. And yet,
Wise Solomon saith wisdom is not in
The grave where all must go.

NYMPH. Not in the grave,
'Tis true, but past its shade shines all the light !
Thy Solomon used only metaphor ;
For he hath also said that better is
The mortal's day of death than that of birth.
The ancient wisest sage hath sang the same.
It is not 'neath the dull and heavy clod
Where man's true self reposeth when he quits
His tiny, mocking earth : he never dies ;
He goes from night to day—from dark to light
(The light of knowledge of his doom eterne)—
That " day," that " light," which Seneca but dreamt :
That " birth " and " proper life " of Tyrius ;
Yea, that transition from " profoundest dark "
To " splendid light " he contemplated, too :
That deathless state which Socrates defines
As but the blest " escape " of man.

ANS. And Death
Is the sole science which vastates the minds
Of human beings ?

NYMPH. It is so. Till then

All mortals are but fools unto themselves—
To life—to earth—to their ambitions—all.

ANS.—Eve plucked the fruit of knowledge *ere* she died.

NYMPH.—Was not that knowledge Death?

ANS. Philosophy

Supreme ; but stern in form, in teaching brief !

NYMPH.—Yea, 'tis the sole Philosophy to man.

Meantime, thine earth's so-called "philosophers "

And "scientists " are children at their toys

Within the twilight of their longest day :

And when they rest, their playthings laid aside,

'Tis but in contradiction, ignorance.

The very path their infant footsteps tread

They make themselves of frail hypotheses,—

E'en some who'd strip thy planet of its God,

But yet whose "science " illumines their thoughts.

ANS.—Can god-like man so poor in knowledge be ?

NYMPH.—Remember what Confucius taught of old :

Man's ignorance is knowledge at its best.

Sir William Hamilton, thy modern, states :

"The highest reach of human science is

The scientific recognition of

The ignorance of all humanity ; . . .

The grand result of human wisdom is

The consciousness that what we know is but

As nought compared with what we do not know."

There's no such thing as Wisdom on thine Earth.

The more man knows, more ignorant he is.

E'en Pagans, Christians, old antiquity

And present time, attest this living truth,

From pens and mouths of inspiration high.

ANS.—Thus had the heathen, then, in darkness wrapt,

Of light as much as we—pre-Christian light—

(*That "light " which "shone " in them, though their
dim minds*

"Could comprehend it not,"—twin light and dark !

As Paul told the Corinthians : "God who caused

The light to shine from darkness, hath now shined

In heart of man the light of knowledge of

God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ.")

NYMPH.—Now gaze upon the vaulted depths of space
Far outward to thy left. What seest thou ?

ANS.—Th'interior of a ball pendant in air.

Its sun is dwindling, like a candle ; and
All light is fading—darkness veils the scene.
The globe holds carcasses of men and beasts.
Its mountains totter, fall, and crumble, whilst
An eagle—starved survivor of all things—
Encircles wildly in the stagnant air
(For all the forests rot upon the ground,
And land itself is rocked by earthquakes vast,
Disgorging grave-yards, scattering withered skulls,
Thus making a Golgotha of the sphere)
Till his glazed eye dilates o'er all the scene :
At last he falls, contagious victim of
The chaos, and the upas of that night.
The lava from the molten Ætnas rush
Like hellish ploughs, now splitting solid things,
Until they drain each ocean, when their own
Exhaustion makes them mortal like all else,
And, shrivelling, they vanish into nought.
The inky gloom continues—not a streak
Inaugurates another day-dawn in
That sphere—the last star shot athwart the night
And made its grave of jet for ever there :
The moon, too, hath been quenched by night of nights :
All—all is void : the spheric object now
Seems like a sooty vapour petrified.
I see no more—night is a liquid sea.
My heart sinks, shudders, at the awful sight !
Oh, Spirit, say, can such things be ; or is
It but a mirage to my human eye
While pilgrim in the ether-desert here,—
Some *ignis fatuus* of space,—a mere
But animated bubble of the air,—
Phantasmagoria of my mortal sense,—
Some demons on their stage of ebony
Enacting thus the tragedy of Doom,—
Nay, is it, Spirit, but the dream of man ?

NYMPH.—It is the obsequies of one small world !

ANS.—Oh, mysteries ineffable and vast !

And shall *all* worlds endure a doom like that ?

NYMPH.—Yes: they, like nature all, have period-life.

ANS.—But Earth—with wealth and beauty manifold,
And where its Great Creator deigned to walk,
And where HIS Son was born, taught, crucified,
And left upon that chosen spot (when His
Redeeming pilgrimage was o'er) His own
Blood-stained Footprints of Immortality
(That Rock which breaks the sceptic-critics' waves),—
Shall *that* World, we call Earth, thus perish too ?

NYMPH.—Ay, and more splendid spheres than thy dull
Earth :

The million myriads which thou seest float,
Like intermingling sparks, about these realms
Which all-elastically stretch beyond
The compass of thy mortal eye though large.
Oblivion shakes the glass of system's fate,
And worlds and universes (its small sands)
Drop tremblingly and hurriedly to nought !

ANS.—Stupendous thought !

And yet, thou learned Nymph,
Some scientists on Earth philosophise
Against prophetic Truth and doom.

NYMPH. Thine Earth's

" Philosophers " are like the Babel fools
Who sought to rear ambition's pile to Heaven,
But failed because of their mortality.

Yea, e'en far centuries shall find them fools.

If they would be familiar with the Truth,
Their ample minds should grasp the easier key
Reposing in the vital, pious Scroll ;

And Faith is the one test of Christian zeal.

E'en Numa swore to Faith as greatest oath.

Why search the Scientific desert, when
The Well springs in th'attested Book divine ?

Yea, the prophetic heathen oft can teach

Thy " scientists " whose minds have means of light.

ANS.—'Tis strange that thus from darkness light should
come !

But still, philosophy and science both
Concur that light and dark are very twins.
Man yet hath much to learn.

NYMPH. He hath : but he,
As fool unto himself, should circumscribe
His raw " philosophy " to Earth : if not,
He must but stumble in the dark, and ne'er
Attain the end of that all-devious path
Which leads to Wisdom known in Heaven alone.
Th'Astronomer of Æsop so was taught,
And also Thales, e'en with ridicule.

ANS.—And yet why chide the blind for groping ? They
Have but a crutch to lean on, and the road
Is curved, and stars to him shine all in vain !

NYMPH.—Forget not, mortal, what the Prophets and
Saints Paul and James have all declared and penned—
Man is the clay within the Potter's hand.

ANS.—Then, clay can but submit !

But say, how far

Lies still our course ?

NYMPH. Jove's realms are now in sight.

ANS.—As on the pinions of the air we flee,
A soft aurora o'er the purple steals.
The beauteous floating crystals all recede
And slowly fade in dizzy distance far.
There is a kind of silver dawning now
Like to the birth of Earthly morn, yet much
More liberal in its approach and scope.
The erstwhile purple now diffuseth in
An inexpressible opal, which seems
To fast expand its lenses to my sight,
And grow more dazzling in its milky sea.
I—— oh ! I cannot lift mine eyes to gaze
Above me,—the ethereal brilliance awes
My vision !

NYMPH. But my form shall cast o'er thee
A shading veil.

Thou seest now with ease ?

ANS.—As the twilighted blind, I only have
The optic sense of flickering light condensed.

NYMPH.—These walls of neblous lustre are our goal.
 This door of crystal we have lastly reached
 Will bring thee, if thou follow straight the path
 Paved with pure light and canopied above
 With a rich rainbow, unto Jupiter.

ANS.—But how, without thee, can I see my way ?

NYMPH.—As thou proceedest thy frail human sight
 Will be still further tempered for thy use.

ANS.—Can I descend without thy company
 Back to mine Earth ?

NYMPH. No ; I must, therefore, stay
 Without here at the door and wait till thou
 Returnest from the business of thy suit.

ANS.—And yet, why should I want to tread the Earth
 Again,—why seek its fruitless solitude,—
 Why suffer thus a living death, and why
 Breathe air which poisons mine existence there ?
 I'm sick of it—of its inhabitants,
 Who, like the lower animals, live on
 Each other, and of whom those thrive the best
 Who can, in baseness or in honour (they
 Make their own moral codes) keep underfoot
 Their fellows, though the latter merit more.
 Earth,—where man's " friends " are oft so but in
 name,

And are the quicksands of society.
 To make an enemy, first make a friend.
 Find in a kindly act a latent foe.
 He who in human nature trusts is mad.
 The man of power doth raise a parliament
 Around him socially, whose highest law
 E'en angels break to safer dwell in Heaven !
 Say, Spirit, can I stay ?

NYMPH. Remember that
 Thou'rt yet of that same mortal clay thou dost
 Spurn rightly (thou shouldst be Zeus' minister)
 And may not stay more than thy courtly hour.
 E'en Hercules, when deified, was left
 Till all his mortal parts burnt in the fire,
 Ere waiting Jupiter conveyed him here

I'the four-horsed chariot midst the thunder peals.
 Achilles, too, had all his carnal self
 Destroyed by flame to make him fit for Heaven.
 Thou must suppress thine aspirations, clay.

ANS.—Will not my magic science barter it ?

NYMPH.—What ?

ANS. Constant habitation here ?

NYMPH. Thou fool,

Have I not said that mortals' die is cast ?

ANS.—Fair Shade, I knew this much on Earth, nor
 came

To this the Paragon of Space,—this Mould
 Of light,—this Seat which hath footstools of worlds,—
 This Air which perfume gives our earthly flowers,—
 This Firmament no minstrel lark hath cleaved
 On matin wing with sweet doxologies,—
 This Temple of Omnipotence, reared by
 The Architect of all Creation,—this
 The Palace where for vassals angels serve,—
 This Matrix of the Voice which anciently
 But said : “ Let there be light,” and, lo, the whole
 Uncompassable space was phosphorent
 With dazzling beauty, majesty of light,—
 These Realms where earthly kings are subjects low ;
 Where beggars are enthroned above them oft,—
 This Fundament of Life,—this Alpha and
 This Omega of vast Eternity,—
 I came not hither to be taught that men
 Must die as common mortals (they have but
 Too many Earthly voices warning them) ;
 I only ask can superhuman power,
 Such as my science hath inspired *me* with,
 Avail not to give me a lodging in
 This place where that same science now hath placed
 My mortal feet ?

NYMPH. I know thy mortal power

And how thou dost so greatly supersede
 Thy fellow kind, but though thy mind *is* as
 A world peopled with thoughts of giants' mould,
 It yet rotates within the sphere of clay.

This journey, which thy magic paved, is but
Permitted as a courtly grace by Zeus :

If thou abusest it, the privilege

Will be bereft thee on the Earth and past.

ANS.—But all the gods, with Jupiter himself
(Who fled in terror from the Giant host)

Could only conquer with a mortal's aid :

Ask Hercules—he's here.

NYMPH.

But this did not

Procure him life celestial save by death.

ANS.—Thou art too stubborn in thine arguments ;

I'll hold no further colloquy with thee.

Perchance with Jupiter I'll better thrive.

NYMPH.—He thrives the best who's not too wise to
learn.

I've shown thy route.

I will await thee here.

ANS.—Till then I adieu say, my sentinel.

[*He disappears through the opening vapour.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—JUPITER'S *realms*. JUPITER *seated on his throne*.

Chorus of attendant SPIRITS.—Hail, prince of air and
king of gods,

The master of the myriad worlds ;

The thunder-peals are but thy words,

The lightning flashes but thy nods !

All hail to thee

And to thy power,

Thy majesty,

Through eterne hour !

We bow

Most low

Before thy throne,

And now

Avow

Thou reign'st alone !

JUP.—Ye sing that pæan sweetly, faithful ones.
But say, this is th' Olympian festive day
On Earth, is't not ?

FIRST SPIRIT. It is, great prince ; and Greece
Is gathering her most voluptuous wealth
Of nature to exhibit to great Zeus.

JUP.—As patron, then, we must descend to it.
This day shall be a holiday for ye
And all within our realm.

Break up forthwith !

FIRST SPIRIT.—But, sovereign, see what being hither
comes !

His step is proud, his mien, too, august :
His eye, though sadful, flashes lustre like
The lightning through a heavy midnight sky :
In the habiliment of clay he wears
A god's demeanour.

Why his presence here ?

JUP.—'Tis by ourself permitted—else, in sooth,
His very human effort were his death.
I know this mortal : he's a magian great,
And by his science borrows superhuman power.
He comes.

Enter ANSELMO.

ANS. Hail, king of kings—of all the worlds !

JUP.—Superior mortal, say what can our power
Vouchsafe to thee ?

ANS. I bring a suit, great prince.

FIRST SPIRIT.—Our council is prorogued, clay, for high
Zeus

Hath just decreed this day a holiday,
For his most special purposes. Thy suit
Must, therefore, be put off.

ANS. Proud spirit, who
Taught thee the office of an advocate ?
Reserve thy rude interposition, or
Thou mightst be lesson'd in its ill results !

FIRST SPIRIT.—What, dost thou dare to rail on me ; vile
dust,

And flout the serving minister of Zeus ?

ANS.—“ Dare ” ? I dare *all*, thou meddling, ranting shade !

Ask him who sits upon that ivory throne,
 If, did I choose, I “ dare ” with hand of clay,
 Not touch its blinding whiteness : if I “ dare ”
 Not with these fingers, yet of dust, caress
 The fierce, spread eagle at his royal feet :
 And if I “ dare ” as mortal yet, approach
 As near—ay, nearer—to him than dost thou :
 Or if, though yet lodged in this human house,
 My spirit is not potent more than thine :
 And if I “ dare ” him to wear splendour now,
 And yet escape more free than Semele :
 And if I “ dare ” him and his brother gods
 With more impunity than Ajax, or
 Salmoneus, or Adimantus too.
 The virgin Æthiopian queen fell swooned
 At Artaxerxes’ merest glance,—I am
 Not of the fearful Esther’s timid mould.
 Achior, too, at Holofernes’ head
 Shrank frightened—I could lend his nature steel.
 Stern Marius awed his executioner
 By but a look,—I’m Marius’ Marius.
 Briareus by a gaze cowed all the three
 Conspirators immortal ’gainst great Zeus,—
 I’m of an order higher than his was.
 Olympias awed two hundred soldiers by
 Appearance when they would have slaughtered her,—
 These warriors were but mortals, not as I.
 And Agis’ executioners retired.
 Nahusha’s eye would shine in vain on me.
 Cassander quaked at Alexander’s stone :
 Zopyrus, too, at Pyrrhus’ glances shook :
 I could have schooled them both in fortitude.
 The Moslems’ twain examiners in death
 Should have no terrors in the grave for me.
 I’d dare old Africa’s enchanters, and
 The fatal lightning from th’Illyrii’s eye.
 I would resist the wild catoblepas ;
 And singly on the earth remain immune

From th' universal death flashed by his eye.
Yea, on Bhavani could I freely smile.
The fair Bithyæ killed by but a glance,—
I should be proof were they before me now.
I could exchange the Gorgons' glance, and live ;
Yea, and outstare the lethal basilisk.

Thou servest, but Anselmo's masterless !

FIRST SPIRIT.—“ Man ”—mystic sublimate of stone,
and plant,

And animal—alike progenitor
And offspring of repulsive simian beasts—
Begetter e'en of insects, reptiles, and
Of birds, unconsciously in age archaic—
A perspired drop oviparous—
Once sexless—polygenetic—yea, once black—
The crown of foetal sea-slime (preached by Earth's
Coy Science, fugitive Philosophy).

ANS.—Satiric servitor, dost thou not know

That man is competent and will transcend

The state and mind of even angels—as

The page antique attests, and Holy Writ :

Yea, he's God's "image" and His "glory" too.

FIRST SPIRIT.—Art thou the Julius Cæsar of thy kind.

And seekest to but make the Earth thy Rome ?

ANS.—Rome had her emperors, as life great souls,

But yet Aurelianus was the first

To wear the diadem. I, flippant slave,

Possess 'midst men the jewel of mine art !

FIRST SPIRIT.—Thou arrogance of flesh, my dignity

Is most outraged——

JUP. Let there be instant peace,

And let *none* dare to raise his voice above

A reverent tone and venerating sound !

Shall insolence from out a mouth of clay

Profane our highest throne? By Styx, not so!

[He rises erect, and at his signal, a sudden darkness descends, with terrific thunder and fierce lightning bolts: ANSELMO, in momentary alarm, shudders and crouches on the ground, but—after enduring a

paroxysm, and with a laboured effort—rises, and defies the terrors.]

ANS.—Rage, mighty engines of the air, which shake
The countless worlds and make them totter all !
And strike, thou concentrated fire of fires
That ripp'st up forests, dartest death through space !
Anselmo toys with both of ye, although
Far, far more puissant and more fierce in form
Than thy poor counterparts on Earth below !
I scorn ye, and defy your might ! Ha ! Ha !

[The scene reverts to its former appearance.]

JUP.—Peace, mortal !

ANS. “ Peace ” ?

But where—with

whom, or when ?

Canst thou amenable make hostile things,—
Anomaly pair with analogy,—
Each opposite make foster apposites,—
Conciliate hate with love ; or woe with bliss,—
Make sin and virtue grow as twins conjoined,—
Blend light and dark to grace fair beauty's brow,—
Infuse the sweets of youth in age's gall,—
Provide in death a living counterpart,—
Make real (greatest task of all) the smiles
Of human beings on their fellow men ?
If thou canst order *one* of these to be,
I'll welcome eagerly thy word of “ peace ” :
Or if (like HE the Galilean waves)
Canst whisper : “ Peace, be still ! ” to breakers
which

Toss momentarily my life, and there shall rest
(As gently as Augustine's soul-dawned Heaven)
A calm upon me : light that holy blaze
To still the mind, which grave Apuleius taught :
Flash that soft, soulful beam which Plato named
With tongue sublime : use that mesmeric voice
The Stagyrte proclaimed : light in the heart
That day-star Peter taught, to bring to man
Edenic life : the Therapeutæ's glow
Which lit their souls : the spark which sanctified

The cobbler-Mystic : yea, that holy calm
Which Hugo of St. Victor preached—that monk
“ Augustine’s Second ” : or give mental peace
As hushed the Earth at Jesus’ and Osiris’ births,
And lent it Heaven : burn such pure torches which
Lit Clement to his Bliss : like Ceres, lull
My too Pantagian life,—if that thou canst,
Oh, let the mandate hurry from thy lips !

JUP.—We rule the universe, not puny lives
Of individual mortals : Lachesis
Hath in her province such control ; and she
And trio are superior e’en to us.
Thou shouldst consult her.

ANS. I have done so, but
Th’appeal to her is like mine unto thee—
Vain, fruitless, quite : I lift my voice to ask,
But only echo answers me !

I find
No power on earth, in heaven, to quench the stream
Of my still Phlegethonic life !

But this
Is not the chiefest purport of my call
(I have abandoned hope for this one bliss,
And all my tears are drawn from out the lake
Of Leucophrys !).

JUP. What’s in our power to grant,
Unhappy mortal, be assured we will
Vouchsafe it.

ANS. I’m no stranger unto thee—
Thou know’st me well—my whole career of life ;
Mine education in a cave, like thine ;
My war with vile existence, and its cause,—
That cause which I myself did found and make
By sacrificing *her* who was my seat
Of joy and happiness, of life !

Had I—
Like Jephthah (at his daughter’s cost), or like
Idomeneus (who thus lost his own son)—
But made a vow to do this thing, I should
Becalm my soul by thinking it divine

To have thus forfeited my other self.
 When Agamemnon would have sacrificed
 Iphigenia, soft Diana changed
 His offering, most kindly, to a ram :
 And Abram's votive gift was, also, stayed ;
 But *mine* was doomed to be unkind indeed !

FIRST SPIRIT.—Thou speak'st as if thou shedd'st her
 blood in thy

Hot passion, which time's lapse makes cool and sane.
 ANS.—I speak of no one's blood—none have I shed.

She (like the trees around the sepulchre
 Of brave Protesilaus) grew beside
 My loveless heart, which coldness made a tomb,
 Till one day, when it reached a blooming height,
 The rosy-laden stem drooped, withered, died !
 Fond Mercury to stone changed jealous-mad
 Aglauros for betraying love, but I
 Made *her* death-cold for her too faithful love !
 I covet Anaxarete's cold fate !

Th'Athenian truly sang : “ Fools never know
 The treasure's value till the treasure's lost ” !

I plucked the years from off her precious life
 And (as this premature decay of frame
 Attests) I but transferred them to mine own !
 For such most venal theft I feel remorse
 More keen and true than Flaccus Fulvius felt
 When stealing his one piece of marble from
 The holy Juno's temple ; or than those
 Marauders of Apollo's Delphic shrine—
 Hiero, Theopolemus ; or he
 The thief of gold enshrined by the gods—
 Base Cepio Servilius ; or than he,
 Vain, desecrating Elgin felt upon
 His wanton larceny of pebbles from
 The Parthenon, which Pallas still doth mourn.

Yea, Aristodicus less wormwood knew,
 When plundering the Branchian aviary.
 No sacred whisper spoke to stay my hand,
 Like that which awed Aristodicus once.

I've filled more mountains and more woods with cries

Of grief than Hercules for Hylas lost !
 Ay, more than he, the master of the world, endured
 O'er Clitus' corse spread to his wounded gaze.
 My tears are ruddier than by Rustem wept,
 Or than the ones Isfendiyâr outpoured
 (Of whom Firdausi sings so sadly-sweet) !
 And, oh, within the silent hours of night
 I've longed to make of mine own body (were
 It pure and good enough therefor) such urn
 Of nature as fond Artemisia found
 To dearer hold her lord than marble tombs !
 Let wild Democritus arise and laugh
 At my distraction and proclaim it as
 The highest folly, I'm yet man in this !

FIRST SPIRIT.—Impartial Providence a conscience gives
 Of scorpions fairly unto thee.

ANS. She doth :
 Nor do I blame her (as vain Pompey did
 Cratippus, when Pharsalia broke his pride) ;
 For 'tis most meet and well deserved indeed.
 E'en Catiline knew peace, compared with me.

JUP.—How can our power avail thee ?

ANS. Give her back
 To me, and, oh, I'll show how I can love—
 How that to tear her from me were to draw
 My blood (as Polydorus' myrtle shed
 When shocked Æneas tore its roots away),—
 How rivet mine affection to her, and
 By dedicating all to bring her joy,
 Take one step nearer Heaven !

JUP. It is too late !
 Thou didst abuse the golden hour and chance.
 Moreover, I can not restore her now ;
 Her spirit, like to ours, immortal is,
 And will not brook again its coop of clay.

ANS.—Thou didst restore Persephone from death
 To partly dwell with Ceres and in Heaven.

JUP.—She was not clay, but, as my child, divine.

ANS.—Was Æsculapius more potent than
 Thyself ?

JUP.—Why ?

ANS. He Lycurgus brought to life.

JUP.—But when we learnt of his mad stolen art
We struck the rebel down !

Impartial must
We reign, and not *one* life give back to Earth.
ANS.—And Polyidus rendered Glaucus back
To life.

JUP. His art was borrowed, not innate.

ANS.—Diana, too, had skill to bring to life
Hippolytus : and thine exceeds her power.

JUP.—Thou fool, he was descended from the gods.

ANS.—But Mercury, thy son and messenger,
Could raise, with his caduceus, up the dead.

JUP.—Mine other son, Apollo, made him *think*
So, when he gave Mercurius the wand.
But as we banished hence Apollo, he
Swayed only with a remnant power usurped.
The shepherd should pursue his fleecy trade.

ANS.—Though humble and obscure, he rose to be
A god, and shone upon the spacious Earth.

JUP.—'Tis so with common mortals oft,
Much less a son of mine, with Luna twin.

ANS.—And did Augustus not pray to that god's
Immodell'd self on Actium's mount before
The former's fight with Antony ; and did
Apollo answer him not with success ?
The Lydian king's voluptuous sacrifice
Was lavished at his shrine.

JUP. But thou must know
It was Augustus' virtuous cause which won—
Th'inherent fault of Antony which lost :
And Cræsus' Hebrus-worship was for gain.

ANS.—But e'en the gods themselves once trod the earth
As merely mortal men (Evernerus
Hath vouched for this from sacred records, chief
Of which he found at *thy* Triphylian shrine).

JUP.—Still, there's a gulf 'twixt their estate and
man's—

One is a sublimation ; one, gross dust.

ANS.—I'll bandy not with thee more on these themes,—
Thou art too subtle.

JUP. 'Tis the common fault
Of mortals to presume to understand
The secrets of divinity. Thrice—thrice
More happy they to humbly rest within
Their reverent ignorance.

Th'Ætnean spark
Of mortals' mind is but Cimmerian :
Their wit is polarised by nescience e'er :
Heaven, Earth, Life, Death, wear still Isiac veils !
ANS.—Man thus but seems Creation's greatest fool,
Though with Icarian intellect he learns
This truth too late !

But if thou canst not give
Her back to me, or grant me second birth
Like Dithyrambus, thou may'st haply yet
Have power to place me close beside her aye.
JUP.—Not till thou'rt free of thy foul mortal flesh
Wilt thou be fit to even ask for that.
Reflect on what sang th'Indian Cálidás ;
On what brave Hector told Andromache ;
Achilles' answer to Ulysses, too ;
On what old Socrates, the wisest thinker, spoke.

ANS.—Death !

This, then, *must* mine only portal make !
Well, be it so, since Death our pilot is
To that Arcanum most sublime of all !
Oh, give me, sovereign of the Earth and air,
This instant form of bliss, for I have sought
It on the Earth each hour—in every spot !
Like lone Ænone, I would kill myself
Through desolation, but all vain th'attempt !
'Tis strange—most strange—that I, so diligent,
Untiring, in the search, should never find
The seat of Death, when many others have
Found him without the seeking or the thought—
The Younger Africanus ; Pyrrhus Great ;
Elpenor ; Æschylus ; Anacreon.
Tithonus-like, I'm deathless and as sad !

Not all the Indias mortal man possessed
Might barter his translation.

God, 'tis just !

JUP.—Did mortals know the secret of the hour
Appointed them to take immortal form,
The gods themselves would be but fools, and man
Of microcosmic thought, would equal them.
His fate, his deathful hour, and mode, are writ
Within the book divine—a volume sealed
To things of clay.

ANS. (*with irony*). Another element
Of " Knowledge " Eve *divinely* was led to
Believe the fruit she plucked inspired her with !
How comes it that the royal Herilus
Possessed three lives ?

JUP. He paid the dearer for
The bounty, for his death was treble.

ANS. Fool
To suffer thus, when *one* would have sufficed
To teach him Wisdom's affluence !

But, prince,

Aristeas had periods, too, in death.

JUP.—Not in the essence of that state—his soul,
Like to a buried spark in charcoal, lay
In darkness till it shot with light regained,
Like Epimenides who thus awoke.

ANS.—His lethargy but took him on the mount
To view the proffered paradise afar.
'Twere happier he had never viewed at all,
Than thus to snatch the bubble-melted bliss.
Five hundred later years unto the first
Brought not that lethal quietude which would
Be *mine* eternal, final heaven of heavens !

JUP.—Know, mortals have two lives, two deaths : a soul
Which hath its day and night : a nature, too,
Of fourfold blend : a double sex ; and e'en
A dual soul : all nature twofold is,
As hath the Nymph explained to thee.

How can

We aid thee further ?

ANS. Since thou canst not grant
 One of the boons I've asked, canst thou permit
 (When this much urgèd Death makes fit my soul)
 I and *herself* to be conjoined for aye ?
 In life my twin, in death my androgyne !
 My nature urgeth thou wilt grant my soul
 Hereafter to mate with its other self ?

JUP.—Rash mortal, I have said that after-state
 Of humankind is our great secret law.

ANS.—Hermaphroditus and his Salmacis
 Were thus allowed to live and solely love.

JUP.—He was our grandson, therefore privileged :
 Besides, his wife by earnest prayer asked
 The boon, and she, like we, immortal was,
 And not vile dust as thou. Again : thou mightst
 Abuse the gods' kind act ; as Sisyphus
 Retained his loan of life.

ANS.—Har-Hari, too, was Vishnu-Siva joined.

JUP.—But they were gods, not dust like thou, and were
 Their own prerogative.

ANS. Then, what *is* in
 Thy power, almighty being (for I tire
 Of nominating boons I am denied) ?
 Darius freed Democedes's chains
 And then placed golden fetters in their stead ;
 But yet they were the bonds of slavery still.
 'Tis said Lynceus so sharp-sighted was
 That he could see through Earth's dense veiling clod ;
 But I, alas, must still be blind to that
 Dear tenant resting in the denser tomb !

JUP.—We could permit thy mortal eyes to look
 Upon her spirit here for a brief time.
 And further (in commiseration, and
 It may be mercy) let thy stay on earth
 Cease at the call from her of thy vile life.
 Will this avail thee aught ?

ANS. It will avail
 My whole ambition and my pinnacle
 Of blessedness !

With this beatitude

I am content, and humbly thank thy grace ;
 Though my remorse turn executioner—
 As Œdipus, the optic-suicide,
 Extinguished both the lanterns which beheld
 The wretched object of his agony !

JUP.—Enough.

In her own hand thy life henceforth
 Abides,—it shall obey *her* call to death !—
 (*To the FIRST SPIRIT*) Call up that Shade who hath no
 much-deserved,

Rare epitaph engraved upon her tomb,—
 She whom the floral nature so did love
 From kindred virtues, pious purity,
 That blossoms, in a fragrant synod, sprang
 (Unset by human hand) upon her grave,
 And turned Death's wilderness to garden bloom !

FIRST SPIRIT (*singing*).—Thou spirit of piety, shrouded
 in light,

Too good for the Earth so transported up here,
 Great Jupiter calls thee to come to the sight
 Of him and the mortal who holds thee most dear !
 Appear, hallowed form,

And bless

Him whom from life's storm,
 Distress,

And pain,

Thou only canst call !

Forth from thy bright hall

I summon thee

Here instantly

Again !

Come—come !

The SPIRIT OF BUONA arises, and looks sorrowfully on
 ANSELMO.

ANSELMO (*dropping reverently, in awe, upon his knee*).—
 Can this be death ? And can the grave breed such
 Majestic beauty and such dazzling form,
 Which like the first-born streak of silver dawn,
 Doth grace the ruder duskiness with soft,
 Intoxicating light ?

In Tullia's tomb

A lamp for fifteen hundred long years glowed,—
In thine, my lamp of love hath brightly burned,
And thus re-kindled thee !

Thou floodest all
Thy sepulchre with chastened light, e'en as
The crypt was lit which navell'd Christ on Earth
(As Zoroaster's was, and Krishna's too)—
Excelling that perfumèd splendour which
The angel brings at sacred Magic's call !

Can this be death ?—and can the moonlight quit
Its heavenly seat to shine within the tomb ?
I dropt a lily on thy grave when I
My lingering, last farewell took of its sight,
Yet did not think it would invert its growth
And bloom in darkness, but would wither like
All nature : still, I do remember now,
I left a tear (mine only one e'er shed)
Upon its virgin petal,—it may be
That crystal drop gave it a newer growth.
Or, like the ivory plant of white and scent,
Thou issuest to decorate the waste.
Yea, like Siberia's flower which blooms in snow,
Thy blossom bursts the winter of the tomb !
Or, like those rarest buds born in the night,
Thy sacred gleam is starlight in the grave—
A Phosphorus who changeth night to day.
Like, too, that Southern flower whose beauty and
Whose virtues constant live beyond decay,
Thou glowest now in splendour e'en of death !
Ay, like that other plant which Pliny names,
And which, on withering, sprang again to life,
Thy fairest blossom is translated too !
Thou art that " holy flower's " prototype
Which opes its bloom in darkness while amidst
The purest dew and chastest ice and snow.
Yea, as the spotless lily sheds at night
The sweetest scent as incense to its God !
The Nazarites thy whiteness must have loaned

To fit them more for Heaven's dazzling Home !
 Thy glorious form would sanctify the beam
 Which falsely lit the Pagan's " night of light,"
 And widen his inspired prophetic eye.
 'Tis said that blind Orion's sight returned
 When watching for the sun to rise in heaven ;
 So, too, the whilome darkness of my soul
 Flees all away before *thy* hallowed glow !
 Yea, like a Horæ, thou dost ope Heaven's Gate
 To flood the scene with holy beams of love !
 Thou must have bathed in Cafur's sacred fount.
 The holy Enoch knew ten heavens ; but
 To me more paradises shine through thee !

Can this be death ?

There is a foreign tint
 Of autumn's red which flickers o'er thy brow,
 Like those false, insubstantial hues the stream
 Reflects from off the August setting-sun.
 Thine aspect shines with purer whiteness than
 At Corinth Frenatrix in marble glowed.
 Yea, Fides' veil was far less white than thou ;
 And Niphe's robe could not compare with thine.
 Thy hair assumes a brighter white than did
 The fair-born locks Pephredo wore ;
 And whiter than the old Albanians grew ;
 And snowier than the godly Boreas wears :
 Yea, lighter 'tis than that the Grææ shewed :
 Thine gleams like Pyrenæi's silver brooks.
 Æneas' mother came to him less bright.
 Those curls have yet a strange, unearthly ray
 About them hovering, like a lingering gleam
 Of virgin gold the dying Hesperus
 Leaves insubstantially on lilies' snow,
 As though by kissing them so heavenly,
 Their petals loaned more hallowed virtue then !
 Thou wear'st a glow more sacred than the light
 Which dazzled Thetis in her pilgrimage !
 Thou art the beauteous afterglow of death—
 More heavenly, real, than th'Egyptian beam

Reflecting day when buried in the night !
I long to lay my weary head against
Those tresses—where the sun is mirror'd so,—
But, oh, I fear to touch them with this hand
Still of base clay, lest all the beauteous hairs,
Resenting such mortality, should run
Themselves to dust and moulder all,—and with
A greater cause than did the silken head
(So golden bright) of Arthur's fairest queen
When desecrating hands profaned her tomb !
Yea, like the impious hand which threatened Christ,
But which fell withered ere a touch was made,
My *loving* hand might know such penalty !
Thy lips are lurid, like the purple hue
The red geranium leaves, decaying, show,—
So rich, it would to Charis' fillets add
A chaster and more godlike colour far.
Thy presence breathes a soft Leucothean scent !

And this is death ?

This, transformation of
The mouldy corse to form of living light ?
Thy presence illumines the hallowed scene
And chases all that signifies of shade,—
E'en as the heavenly ray turned night to day
Around the altar at Jerusalem !
Upon thy grave the sun no shadows could
Have cast—'twas sacred as Lycæus' grove !
Some Albamarla's all-white earth must have
Enshrouded thee and alchemised thy dust :
Or thou hast lodged in that part of the Earth
Which Bion the Abderan found to be
Irradiated with half-yearly light.
Oh, may thy hallowed form, heaven-gilded thus,
Be soon my lamp to light my steps to thee !
I'll follow it more vigilantly than
St. Thecla, the first holy martyr and
Apostle, did her bright, celestial guide !
Murillo must, in vision, have beheld
Thine all-entrancing presence, which inspired

The glorious Madonna from his brush :
 And Raphael, too, and Reni, Lippi, and
 Landelle, Vecchio, Filipepi, and
 Perrugino, del Sarto, Bazzi, and
 Da Vinci, Dolci, Delaroche, and
 Sassoferato, Botticelli ; yea,
 And Titian too—who all had eyes divine !

Can it be death ?

Transfusion of two lives—
 One lately flickering in a lantern of
 Immuring flesh, with one of softened sun ?

Yea, 'tis death :

And from out that ebon night
 This exhalation riseth bright and clear,—
 E'en as the evening-star through Heaven's Door
 Peeps, whispering to mortality the truth
 That there's no night unto the human soul ;
 That life is two-fold ; that e'en Death is Life !

Death !

Immortality from out that vault
 Thus exorciseth souls of buried men !

Magician Death !

He lifts his finger from
 The grave (the pilgrim's goal across the wild
 Of earth) and life, the mirage, vanisheth !

Great Nature's Raphael, Death !

He thus paints his
 Sublime " Transfiguration " of us all !

The midnight Death !

Life's day of sunshine sinks
 In that, to break thus in a dawn eterne !

Death ?

Can this be the dazzling master-key
 Unlocking Earth's and Heaven's Mystery ?—

The signet to the speculations all
Of Sciences, Philosophies, of man ?—
The sublimation of the mortal Thought ?—
God's Answer to the spacious Universe
That script and thought of dim antiquity
Were right—that man from light to light returns ?

Rough alchemist !

His antidoteless touch
Doth change, " within the twinkling of an eye,"
Corruptible to incorruptible !

This beautifier Death !

Mankind crawls on
In sluggish haste through its first course unto
The grave, and then the chrysalistic life
Is changed, and wears a new and fairer shape,—
So fair that morning's star, heaven's first-born light,
Is but a mendicant parhelion !

[Rising, and speaking now in an outburst of fervour.

Oh, " Death," throw off thy mask, for thou art LIFE !
Th' Athenian master of Augustine taught
The truth—*there is no death !* The Pagan and
The Christian, Scientist, Philosopher,
And lowly flower, the mountain cataract,
The dancing stars, the day-dawn's constant birth,—
All, all are witnesses to this eternal truth !
Nor Heaven's, Earth's, nor Nature's lexicons
Contain the word ; 'tis man's—nay, Devil's—term !

JUP.—What is thy wish now we have called her up ?

ANS.—To speak to her who music gave my throat.—

(To BUONA, and dropping again on his knee) The

Koran states that true Alilcaf stayed
In pious attitude three hundred years,
When the all-glorious bird of Paradise
Announced Mahomet's holiest approach :
But, oh, methinks I could stay here to watch
Thine actual presence through those Occult " weeks "
The Indians taught,—yea, past old Brahmâ's " Day " !

The scent pervading thy bright presence is
Arabia's Arabia—more divine !
Great Solomon, through wisdom's fame, was graced
And, though a king, was honoured, by a queen
Of the immortal spirits coming to
His sight : but thou, sublimest shadow, com'st
(And in more loveliness) when exorcised
By purest love, to bless the eyes of one
So base as I—most abject wretch of all !
The pious Simeon to be nigher Heaven
Spent five times seven years on pillars raised
Upon a mountain top each day and night :
But love's mere thought hath bridged *my* gulf to
thee !
The self-same Syrian called his loved one back
From death to life before she entered Heaven,
That he might speak dear words which linked their
souls ;
But since to *me* such blessed power is not,
And since I would not selfishly recall
Thy spirit from its Mould and Home,
I'll meet thee *There*,—hold thou the Door ajar !
The brightness wrapping thine eternal brow
Reflects thy Heavenly Home so potently
That my base mortal eye is blinded at
The sight—as was that painter awed in his
Too vile attempt to limn the Saviour's face !
'Tis said that Catharina Ricci's face
Glowed with the light of the Redeemer's brow :
And that St. Angela de Foligni's
Shone holy glory, and her eyes were lamps ;
A star of iridescent hue shot forth
From her pure side to find its home in heaven.
That saint's face, too, John of the Cross, was lit
With lambent fire, reflecting light divine.
But, paragon of sacred mirrors, thou
Alone translatest attributes divine,
For thou'rt come straight from God and Paradise !
Madame de Chantal branded on her breast
The hallowed name of Jesus : Suso, too,

The mystic-monk, engraved that Name upon
 His bleeding bosom : but, oh, *I* have cut
 Upon my lacerated, weeping *heart*
 Incisions deeper far, with sorrow's style !
 Thou soul, whom since thy transit, I have loved
 With all the passion of mine own bound soul
 (My love was born upon thy burial),
 Thine eye is glazed with such serenity,
 And on thy brow alights such hallowed grace,
 That being yet a mortal, I am awed
 Almost to silence !

But, oh, I have not
 Been always silent, for I've daily called
 (Loud as Darius's Egyptian, or
 As Xerxes' Artachæes : Stentor, too :
 Al Abbâs, uncle of Mohammed once)
 Upon thy name among the lonely rocks
 Till my loud voice hath cracked itself,
 And neighbouring rooks have startled at
 The echo, and have hurried from their holes !
 Yea, louder than the Tyrrhene trump my voice !
 And through the night, 'mid deathful silence, I
 Have by such calling frightened all the things
 Which creep my cave in fellowship with me,
 And they have left their human mate alone !
 No answer came, but dismal echoes, like
 The horrid, harsh resounds from owls at night !
 I cried to all th'expansive universe,
 And begged, and prayed, and yearned, and pleaded
 long
 That I might follow thee or thou return
 To me, but all my groans were echoed back !
 With thee for dearest thought, my memory
 Hath far excelled e'en Mezzofanti's mind ;
 And John the Martyr's, too, of Palestine.
 Yet now, ah now, I'm face to face with thee,
 And feel thou'lt bless me with a tender sound !
 Thy voice to me would be more musical
 Than melodies the Moslems hear in Heaven.
 Nay, should the sound be but my mandate brief

Which summoned mine own soul away from Earth,
 I'd feel but ushered to my paradise
 With more velocity than Enoch or
 Elijah were of old ! My soul would be
 More heavenly swift and sure in flight than stern
 Atrides' javelin !

Oh, speak !

Let all
 The burning anguish of my soul on earth,—
 Th'insatiate scorpions' feast upon my mind,—
 The knives which wanton with my stubborn heart,—
 The fatal and eternal Nessian cloak
 Enveloping my restless conscience still,—
 Let these and other horrors all which load
 Mine earth's existence, urge thee not alone
 To speak and cheer me now, but happier to
 Demand my life ! I'll be as ready as
 A Scævola, and rush into the grave
 More quickly than did Mettus Curtius,
 Or than the Christian martyrs at old Rome !
 I would bestride the lightning Lampon hence !

Oh, speak !

Thy voice, which sweetly lulled to sleep
 Mine infant soul of purity, may not
 Transport me to oblivion now, but, oh,
 'Twill charm me into newer life and bring
 Me near the realms of bliss celestially,—
 Yea, its dear music (like an echo from
 A harp, which floats at Zephyr's fairy touch)
 Will in my soul create a paradise !

Oh, let thy voice hush my too heated pulse
 In medicinal calmness and repose
 More blessed than the Third Alphonso felt.

Thou'rt silent !

By the joy thou feltest when
 Life brought me unto thee, I urge thee speak !

Still silent !

By the happiness such birth
Gave to thy partner, speak, though but a word !

Yet voiceless !

By the cruel curse on me
Which preys upon my soul each crowding hour—
More sateless than the gorged Promethean bird,—
I urge the balm of one soft word from thee !

Still speechless !

(*Rising*) By the great supremacy
My Magic gives me over humankind,
I mingle my command with spirits,—speak !

Thou'rt tongueless (struck so like the shock'd wife of
Nausimenes). E'en Ægles, dumb-born, broke
His cord and spoke ; and Gabienus spoke
In death ; and Echo in her stone eterne
Retained her speech.

Thy silence cannot be

Lupine.—

(*To JUPITER*) Great Jove, if in thy mystery
Thou hast an art to make this phantom speak,
I crave the boon of thine enforcing it.

JUP.—Her tongue will only be unloosed to call
Thee to thy death : we have transferred this power
To her, upon thine acquiescence, so
We may not now dictate her will to her.

ANS.—I care not, prince, for that,—'tis what I wish !
And yet, if thou the power of speech couldst give
Unto Achilles' war-steed Xanthus, where
Is now thy skill e'en in a greater thing ?
Thou causedst, too, warm sympathy to rise
In Æthon, and in Cæsar's chargers when
The latter crossed the Rubicon in tears.
Apollo, too, when but a fœtus spoke
(And He, the great Redeemer of mankind,
Conversed while yet within His cradle rude).

JUP.—Her silence means thine hour hath not yet come.

Return, then, to thine Earth until she shall
 With her own finger point the fatal hour
 To thee upon the dial of thy life !

ANS. (*to BUONA*).—The Moslem's corse is in the grave
 received

By a bright angel sent from Paradise :
 Oh, be *thou* mine eternal guardian !
 And Abelard, 'tis said, within his grave,
 Then tenanted for twice ten years, stretched forth
 His arms when fond Eloisa's form was dropt
 Into his vault, and, quickening, clasped her close,
 When both their kindled ashes were conjoined
 In nuptials—love in death so potent was.
 Then, oh, thou dearest love, reserve for me
 The same enkindling and immortal clasp,—
 My spirit's heaven lies there, and not beyond !

JUP.—Enough.—

(*To BUONA*) Spirit, retire.

This mortal's life

Remains thine own to shorten or prolong !—

[*The spirit of BUONA disappears.*]

(*To ANSELMO, who has advanced—with outstretched arms*
 —as though to have followed BUONA) Unhappy
 mortal, back to earth descend,

And, till thou art commanded thence,—

ANS.

I shall

But daily die,—twin penalty of life !

JUP.—Oh, man, remember—yesterday is dead ;

To-day is dying, and to-morrow's birth

May be arrested by the hand of Fate !

The hour which even now strikes o'er thy head

May cease, and baffle all thy hopes and fears !

Yea, yesterday, e'en passing moments too,

Are wrecks and ruins in the gulf of Time—

Lost from the calendar of fickle Doom,

Expunged from sight (as stars from morning's sky) !

Then, man of frailty, shadow of the Earth,

Build thou upon such wreck and ruins of

Each Yesterday, To-day, and Moment, that

Thy death shall even triumph o'er thy life !

ANS.—Oh, wreck in Time's wreck, did I run but with
 My life's material torch to its dark goal
 The grave, I'd quench it 'neath my weary feet !—
 I thank thee for thy grace and bounty, prince,
 And must remain thy debtor.

On Earth's stage

I'll play my final part.

So fare thee well.
 [*He exits, and the scene closes.*]

SCENE II.—*Interior of ANSELMO'S cave.*

ANSELMO is seated, soliloquising over the skull, which he
 is holding.—Thou legacy of Death bequeathed to
 Earth

As symbol of man's nothingness, thou dost
 From out thy chapless visage teach
 Mankind the consummation of its Earthly hopes !
 Instruction morbid ! Wisest councillor !
 This the reply of Immortality
 To Man !

For this rude state we cultivate
 Our bodies and still beautify our clay !
 For this we live within a little hour
 The throneless kings of our own making still !
 For this we build a pyramid of hope,
 And, thus to droop, soar with ambition proud !
 Against this too inevitable doom
 Men struggle desperately with their pains,
 And find their groans mocked by a laughing skull,
 And all their sighs but echoed in the grave !
 Yea, can it be that such a casket, which
 Conserved a mental world, should thus decay ?—
 The temple even where a god hath dwelt,
 Debased into a home for worms ?—
 The station of the spark which pierced and lit
 The night of Nature's many mysteries,
 Conserving now e'en Nature's densest night ?
 The school whose teacher dared to tutor Life,

Now yields that dunce's chair to master-Death !
 This thing, which decked with Nature's beauty
 once,
 Afforded its possessor vainful life,
 Death uses for his jest ; the grave, his court,
 But echoes his triumphant, mocking bells !
 Yea, Death's the fool to Nature, and he laughs
 To draw his motley jests from gaping skulls,
 And tune with human groans the bells
 Upon his bauble of a withered bone !
 Earth's highest destiny to *all* men—*this* !
 We fools are taught the swift are only slow ;
 The wise but foolish, and the strong but weak ;
 The palm unto the mighty man is not ;
Chance is at once our tyrant and our nurse !
 Oh, Man, in paradoxes thou art lost !
 When HE, that great Mechanic, shaped our form
 From mould of primal mystery, HE could not mean
 That we, purveyors of HIS Image, should
 But meet such base, eternal chaos,—HIS
 Was secret Art to thusly paint the life
 All-briefly meted out to man of clay ;
 And to thus whisper from its depths of gloom
 (For to the thoughtful, night itself can speak)
 That it but forms the link celestial so—
 E'en as a star that binds the eve and morn !
 Man's life must be eternal if it is
 The element of Immortality
 (And that it is the Stamp Divine attests !).
 As Jamí, also Cicero, affirm,
 The true soul is the surest and most swift :
 And from the body darts like lightning-flash
 From out a cloud, as Heraclitus saith.
 So, too, Mohammed's servants swiftly fly.
 And other Persian songs remind us that
 We all our destined pilgrimage must do !
 Then, be it so,—we hasten to our last,
 Supernal fate, to taste the atmosphere
 Beyond !

The SPIRIT OF BUONA arises.

BUONA.

Anselmo !

ANS.

Mother !

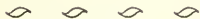
BUONA.

Come !

ANS.

I—oh !

[He falls, and expires.]



ON THE DEATH OF MY SISTER MARY.

FAREWELL to thee, beautiful spirit, farewell !

Gone—gone, like a star through the darkest midnight,
In Heaven to shine and immortally dwell !

Thy soul shall There hang as a jewel of light
To sparkle in crystallised loveliness where

Angelical spirits, celestial e'ermore
Like thou, shall shine with thee beyond the blue air !

No changing horizon on that golden Shore
Shall render thy lustre short-lived as the night :

Its dazzle no waning or setting shall know,—
A bright constellation in Vaults of all Light,

Thy twinkle in Heaven shall eternally glow !
Thy beauteous spirit hath quitted the Earth

To light evening's star, the first lamp in all Heaven
To burn sacred flame and to kindle the birth

Of choice virgin fire to the world which is given !
Farewell, lovely spirit ! I'll watch through the night

For thy rising star in the Realms of the blest,
That its bright reflection of pure, holy Light

May guide me through death with thee ever to rest !

TO THE RIVER WYE AT HAY.

Flow on, thou limpid, ceaseless current, flow,
In shimmering carelessness and sparkling pride :
The eye which gazes now upon thy face
Wears lustre which will soon grow dim and dull,
But the all-crystal beauty of thine own
Smiles with the sheen of an eternity.
The noonday sun transfers heaven unto thee
And makes thy bubbles symbols of our lives ;
Whilst in the lonely, hushed and lovely night
Thou dost afford a mirror to the stars ;
And in such hallowed period thy bright sound
Is sweetly like a sister's wooing voice.
Yea, even in the night thou still dost wear
A lovely countenance—inverted sky ;
And in the darkest night thou still dost glow
As doth the dark eye of a woman shine.
Oh, let me plunge my future years in thee,
That with the like oblivious current, I
May flow in calm yet stern indifference
Past all the world and life's impeding rocks !
Yea, in thy crystal Lethe bear, oh bear,
My vain regrets, my transient hopes, my fears,
To some obliivate gulf as drinks thyself !
Speed on, thou smiling rival of old Time !
Can I not be a bubble on thy foam,
And float serenely down the tide of life ;
Or watch, like Time, with an immortal eye
And placid sense, thine everlasting spring ?
Nay—nay ; thou, River, art alone with Time ;
Both stern and careless in your frensied flights,—
The sighs, the prayers, the tears, of mortal man
Waste on the mocking ear of both, and are
Absorbed like dewdrops and the common things !

Ah, could these early furrows on my brow
As insubstantial be as ripples on
Thy face of smoothest glass and permanent,
My fount of years would change its ebbless flood
Into a spring of newer, wiser hopes !
Go on, thou liquid oracle of Truth,
For ever on thy tireless pilgrimage :
The hand which takes thy crystal drop in it
Waves its farewell to thy perpetual spring—
Thou dial which doth know no hourly mark !
I stand beside thee on thy crumbling bank,
As when in boyhood I made wanton with
Thy curling foam, and dreamt my blooming youth
Was like thine own—a pleasure evergreen :
But, childhood's playmate, thine all-lifeful crest
(As though it reared some new Medea's herbs)
Is still as fresh, and, oh, as blushing bright,
Whilst my pale brow, e'en like thy crumbling rocks,
Comes out a sadder combatant with Time !
Oh, River, blame us not if we behold
Thine amaranthine buoyancy and face
Without aspiring to the self-same bliss
And to the power to break decrees of age !
But, nay, it cannot be ! We bubbles ride
Too frailly on the callous surge of life,
And early vanish in an empty blank !
Good-bye, old River : I will leave thee lone,—
Our courses differ, but our goals are stern,
Though they affirm we spring to life again !
Good-bye, thou earthly immortality !

TO THE SUN-DIAL IN HAY CEMETERY,

On which is inscribed : " Time is short."

NAY—nay, thou silent, sunny oracle :
Time is *not* short on earth, or yet beyond ;
'Tis long—and oft appalling long—in both.
E'en with our mortal eye dilating o'er
Th'elongate chasm of time's future space,
Can it not mentally discern new worlds
Of time shoot up like Phœnices upon
The ashes of the pre-created spheres ?
The ocean of eternity doth lash
Its myriad bubbling worlds on tide which ebbs
Unto its shoreless bay Infinity.
This comprehension whispers : " Time is *long* !"
Or, mossless, cold, philosophising stone,
Come, take mine airy hand and walk with me
In spirit through post-life's secreted vaults,
And in the subterranean labyrinth
We'll read the oracles profounder than
Thine own—though they are tongueless as thyself !

Now float thine all-pervading eye, like mine,
Across the ebon darkness of the scene :
Thou seest the midnight vapours rolling back,
And purpled fairness ravishing the air—
Like to a night less real on the Earth—
And million worlds in starry forms advance
On pinions of celestial loveliness.
Lost in their dazzling company, we float
With ether'd buoyancy in further space.
We used to watch, with eyes of recreant dust,

The wooing day-dawn gently stealing o'er
The sapphire East and place a silver crown
Of universal beauty on the Earth ;
But, oh, *this* seems that very day-dawn's Mould
And Fount where it derived its crystal Light !
It is more gushing and absorbing in
Its Heavenly virtue—poetry of Light.
The stars, our late ethereal steps, dissolve
In liquid azure now, as still we soar
On, on and upward on air's bosom soft—
Gone darkling to their tombs oblivious
Within eternity's sarcophagus,
Whilst we, in essence now coeval with
The Principle Omnipotent, survive
The magni-chaos, and look down upon
The sepulchre of nobler worlds than Earth !—
Oh, God, we lift our eyes to gaze again
Upon th'eternal altitude aloft,
But swelling brilliance floods our vision and
Intoxicates the sense it hath usurped
To thus irreverently view the Realms
Enshrouded by Thy glorious Majesty !
We helpless farther float : but Thou'rt too good
To lend our spirits pinions to descry,
Through lens of inspiration so divine,
The merest shadow of such spirits' doom !—
Our eyes, still wooed, turn yet—— Ah, now
The lustre blinds their still too carnal sight !
Back—back to Earth and to mortality
Quick let our spirits through the air descend :
Like swimmers in the ocean's rage, they are
Dashed back to thought's dim gulf all-bottomless !

Then, is time short ? Imagination shall
Reply, as truer oracle of God !

AN ADDRESS

To (the then) "D," or Hay, Company, 1st Brecknockshire Rifle Volunteers on an Occasion of their Annual Supper.

LET music roll with all its merry swell,
And let the lamps (which borrow from your souls
Their essenced light of glory's readiness)
Flood all the air and re-inspire your hearts :
Let truant tongues amuse with anecdote ;
And let the crimson liquid gild the wit :
Let bosoms heave with mutual " Auld Lang Synes "
(And one for *this* old, lyric comrade too !) ;
And let meet revelry beguile your time,—
'Tis peace around, joy lights your hearts and homes.
But be ye ready (as was Wellington)
To quit with speed the wanton tricks of sport,
And answer with your bayonets the threat
War possibly may thunder in your ears !
E'en though the annals of the captious world
Record the cavalry its martial pomp,
And saddles are the thrones of battle e'er,
And Glory's hurricanes are stirrup'd high :
Though e'en the gods in ancient synod deemed
(In Vulcan's and Minerva's great dispute)
The horse to be the symbol sole of war :
And though Eumelus in the Trojan war
Could boast of the two fleetest chargers, which
Apollo reared himself in Thessaly :
Though Rome's vain Emperor Caligula
Made Incitatus, his war-horse, high priest :
Heliogabalus his consul made :
Though Pharaoh boasted fifty thousand horse ;
And Mithridates forty thousand strong :

Epaminondas into battle rode
Triumphant with five thousand cavalry ;
And Alexander with seven thousand strong :
Though chiefly Xerxes' horsemen menaced Greece
From out his army of five million men :
Though Hannibal fought with twelve thousand horse ;
And Datis with twelve thousand cavalry :
Arsaces with quite twenty thousand horse :
Antiochus twelve thousand : Brennus led
Full fifteen thousand horsemen 'gainst proud Rome :
Though Marlborough depended on his horse
For victory on Blenheim's gory plain :
Though mounted Cossacks chiefly harassed all
The fleeing Frenchmen from lost Moscow's prize :
Though Balaclava memorised our horse :
Though cavalry decided battles of
Both Leuthen, Leipsic, also Winchester :
Though Blücher's horse helped us at Waterloo,
'Twas British *bayonets* responded to
The great command : " Up, Guards, and at 'em now ! " "
Sage Chabrias, the Athenian general
(Four centuries ere Christ's redeeming Birth)
Was author of the fateful, martial mode
Of welcoming the bloody foe to death
Upon his army's knee with upturned spears :
Horatius with a single blade on foot
Alone kept back Porsenna's army all :
Acilemus alone withstood the Goths :
'Twas but the single, leading weapon of
Leonidas on foot which chiefly held
'Gainst Persia's legions (for three days—which mark
The calendar of Greece in bloody red—
When but a traitor spoiled his bravery)
That narrow sepulchre Thermopylæ :
Troy's warlike pride bowed to Achilles' blade :
Napoleon's flowered, mightiest cavalry
Rushed to their tomb in Britain's kneeling square !
Thus glory tips our footmen's bayonet !
Then, lose no faith within yourselves, or be
Out-dazzled by the glittering cavalry

(And though unlike old Persia's choicest men,
Who went to battle with gold-crested arms) :
Ye may repeat tradition's noble past
And rear a monument on native soil
To brave the spite of stern, chaotic Time !
Be bold and true, and not unmindful that
The Gangaridæ's simple valour awed
An Alexander into craven fear.
Remember, too, that crowns have been bestowed
On soldiers for their mercy : and may each
Of *you* be crowned a Rufus Helvius !
May you your leader cause to utter words
More cheerful than Napoleon when he,
Retreating from lost Moscow on that eve
The twelfth of cold December eighteen-twelve,
Dejected, warmed his hands before some logs
Within a Russian peasant's lowly hut,
And murmured, with a punctuating sigh :
“ Ah, this is pleasanter than Moscow now ! ”.
If each one of your gallant band, should war
Claim for its prize his glorious, ready life,
Might not breathe out the vainful, pompous words
Napoleon spoke : “ Head of the Army now ! ”
Each man might utter with his death-drawn sigh
The eloquent and final whisper of
Lyre-master Byron : “ I must slumber now ! ”—
Sleep tranquil from a life all-nobly closed !
Thus shall each pass and, like the setting-sun,
Leave on the hovering clouds, viewed by the world,
A richly-tinted legacy to Time !
And he shall thus e'en Sovereigns' fate excel :
Beheaded Mary : Broken-hearted Bess :
The anchorited Charles the Fifth ; and he
So bankrupt both in means and glory all,
The Fourteenth Louis : solemn Cromwell, too,
Who was but shrouded in anxiety :
Beheaded Lady Grey : Edward the Fifth :
Assassinated James the First : the Fifth
James, slain by grief : decapitated Charles
The First : the Second exiled Charles ; and the

Unthronèd James the Second, so repulsed :
 The two Pretenders, crownless, death-doomed too :
 The Second Edward, throne-robbed, massacred :
 The starved, imprisoned Second Richard wild :
 The miserable Anjou's Margaret :
 Chilperic First, the Nero of the French ;
 And Charles the Bald : the beggar Charles the Fat :
 The captive Charles the Simple, left alone :
 The beauteous Marie Antoinette, who dyed
 Th'insatiate guillotine with blood : the fair
 Napoleon's broken-hearted Josephine :
 Rich Russia's Catherine, haunted to death ;
 And, lo, the greatest yet of these behold,
 Confined within and by a dungeon choked—
 That eagle whose fierce eyes flashed lightnings forth
 And held the world within his talon'd vice,
 Napoleon ! Cleaving now the heavens no more,
 His plumage flutters 'gainst a cage's bars :
 His world's applause but echoes in a vault !
 He who could juggle with a hemisphere,
 And nations hold within his warlike hand,—
 He who could dim the sun o'er empires all,
 Now sighs within the twilight of the blaze
 Which drew him late to Glory's lustrous sphere !
 Earth's god of war—a puppet but of clay !
 The master o'er his mortal destiny—
 The slave to merely Chance's vain caprice !
 As Bloody Mary on her last sick bed,
 At news that Calais had been captured, raised
 Herself and joyful murmured : " When I die
 Take out my heart, and you will ' Calais ' find
 Writ on it," may each war-struck heart of yours
 Reveal th'inscription " BRITAIN " nobly there !
 Farewell !

May yet your bugle-call
 Be distant far ; your ears be still alert !
 But should some foe, aggressively and vain,
 Usurp Great Britain's shores to spoil her peace,
 Seize nobly then your bayonets and fight
 In God's high Name, in Britain's, Love's, your own !

THE PRIESTESS.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

CHARACTERS :

ORESTES, brother to Iphigenia.	IPHIGENIA, priestess at Diana's
PYLADES, his friend.	temple at Taurica.
THOAS, King of Taurica.	CELESE, her attendant.
PYREUS, attendant at his palace.	MIONE, attendant at Thoas' palace.
SENACA, a Thracian merchant.	IOMA, wife of Senaca.

SCENE.—*Taurica. The coast, with sea-landscape. A statue of Diana. Steps running off at back. The temple is seen in distance, among trees on high ascent.*

The scene opens with the setting sun, and with the evening star showing. As the scene proceeds, twilight gathers and the moon rises, its light continuing to gradually increase until end.

Enter SENACA and IOMA (the latter carrying a child).

SEN.—How welcome is this verdure and this shore !

Here will we rest awhile and sleep obtain

Ere pressing on to Lemnos' distant strand.

There, weary mate, beseat thyself upon

[Pointing to a piece of rock.]

Th'inviting seat of courteous nature—she

Who loves and serves mankind, the birds of air,

The beasts of earth, the tenants of the seas,

Yea, all the seen and unseen things around

(Alas, that man, with noblest reason, should

Alone in all the family rebel

And oft invert his best relationship !).

IOMA (*sitting*).—The day is fading ; we must make our couch

Here on this beach until the morn shall come

With light and hope, to pilot us along :
And see, Senaca, with what sweet, calm joy
Our little one repositeth.

Ah, what sight
Is dearer, or what sweeter orator
Addresseth nature's soul than doth a babe
In slumber, with the halo of a smile ?

[*Kissing child.*

SEN.—So nestles the endearing pearl beneath
The surging billows—all-oblivious, in
Its hiding-place, to storms which rage aloft !
Ioma, I will walk abroad and see
If any dwell here, so that we may gain
Some shelter and some comfort for the night.
Do thou wait there, and rest till I return.

[*Is going, but when about to ascend steps, IPHIGENIA enters, at top of steps. IOMA falls asleep.*]

IPH.—Hold, stranger ! Say, whence comest thou ?
Thy name,
And business here ?

SEN. I came from Thracia, and
Am making eager sail for Lenmos, but
By reason of malignant waves, my course
Hath been delayed, so I am forced to take
The shelter of this most inviting shore
For me, my wife and babe till day returns.

IPH.—Thy wife and babe !—

(*Aside*) What scheme hath Hecate ?
(*To Senaca*) Where are the objects of thy fostering care ?

SEN. (*pointing*).—In that yon niche of earth there gently
rest

Those dual mirrors which to gaze into
I view myself more humanised and great.

IPH. (*coming down steps, and speaking aside*).—Ye gods,
what mighty task is set for me !—

They sleep. I envy them their silent joy.—

(*To SENACA*) Dost thou not know what coast this is,
or what

Dire fate confronts intruders on its banks ?

SEN.—Nor name nor hidden laws of it I know :

But, sure, whate'er the land, whoe'er its king,
An honest traveller may shelter woo ?
We *all* wayfarers are—kings, beggars, old
And young—along life's road of haze and curves :
Some of us race in glee, whilst others limp
In pain and sorrow o'er the flinty course ;
And some the milestones pass while still the eye
Would trace them backwards nor would read the
first !

IPH.—Good argument where land is governed by
A fellow-mortal all-exclusively ;
But here the gods a prior law decree
E'en to the king for his obedience strict.

SEN.—I long to be informed what penalty
(If penalty there be) which thou dost seem
To thus imply awaits me and my tender mates.

IPH.—The great Diana hath an altar here——

SEN.—And altars must have sacrifices ! But
I'm strong, if not in arms (which I bear not)
At least in manly virtue, honesty,
And in that simple pride which every wretch
May wear as boldly as Achilles waved
His awful shield that shone with heavenly fire !

IPH. (*aside*).—How all his words a coward make of me,
And snatch the dagger from my pulseless hand !—
(*To SENACA*) Alas, no mortal aid can save thee from
Thy doom ! Ye three must be Diana's gifts
From me, her priestess,—*I* am helpless, too !

SEN. (*pointing to IOMA*).—Is, then, thy mistress e'en so
bloody that
She dooms the innocent and guilty, all
Alike ?

IPH.—No—no exception doth she make
To strangers here should they arrive in doubt
Or knowledge or in ignorance of what
Their final doom is which awaits them all.

SEN.—Is, then, the eye of even Hecate
So hellish that it can with patience view
The sufferings and the sacrifice of both
The old and young ?

[*Going to IOMA, and gently and without disturbing her, taking the child from her arms, and producing it before IPHIGENIA.*]

Nay, can Diana's heart
Be from the hunting field so petrified ;
Or Hecate so deaf from hellish howls ;
Or Luna, in her tender throne in heaven,
Be so estranged from attributes divine,
That e'en an orator like *this* can plead
With rhetoric so mute, so godlike, yet
Plead only all in vain ?

Oft there is much
More eloquence in silence than in words :
I read mine answer in thy dumb response.

[*Restores child to IOMA's arms.*]

IPH.—Response of *mine*, yea ; not Diana's ! *She*
Hath none to make : her word brooks no reply,
Save strict obedience.

SEN. Pray, then, grant (it is
My final wish) that I alone shall rouse
My slumbering partner and her gentle charge,
And tenderly prepare her for our fate.

IPH.—'Tis well, unhappy stranger.

I'll retire,
And get the altar ready, then return
Within a little while.

Prepare, then, for
The sacrifice, and all the gods be kind !

[*Ascends steps.*]

SEN. (*hastily approaching IOMA and waking her*).—
Ioma ! Rouse thyself ! There's danger nigh !

Come—we must take the ship again with speed——

IOMA. (*rising in alarm*).—What evil lurks ? The
child——

SEN. (*dragging her away*).—No words ! Time is a
tyrant, and remains

Arch-champion, whilst vain man his puppet is !

[*Exit.*]

IPH. (*on suddenly perceiving the flight of SENACA and IOMA*).—Ye gods, they have escaped !

(*Resignfully*) Heaven's will be done !

[*She leans on a rock, and soliloquises.*]

So thus another day in glory dies !

And thus the gods hang out their starry lamps
To light the earth and whisper things profound.

Oh, day and night ; ye light and shadow ; smiles
And tears ; e'en youth and age ; good fortune and
Adversity ; devotion, hatred ; strength

And impotence ; success and failure ; growth

And waste ; yea, life and death of nature all,

What twins ye are, what very synonyms !

How beautiful the world ! How lovely doth it sleep !

The new-born star its silvery vigils keeps,

And shines the virgin hope for dawn's approach.

"Hope" ! I have such a starry beacon blazing
here—(*Touching breast.*)

But will there be a sunrise to my night ?

The Tullian lamp shall light the vaulted gloom

And change sepulchral shadows into one

Unbroken day of steadfast brilliance !

How lonely do I feel, e'en like a captive lark

Which in sweet minstrelsy would mount to heaven,

But whose frail wing is crippled for the flight !

[*Sitting on step, and resting face on hands.*]

Enter CELESE.

CELE. (*approaching* IPHIGENIA, *and laying hand on her shoulder*).—What?—is my mistress deep in thought, or tears ?

IPH. (*looking up*).—Celese, I am troubled and perplexed.

I feel a shallop tossing on the waves—

No friendly sail in sight, no light ahead,

To cheer my heart, to mark my haven out.

CELE.—Dear mistress, may I know thy grief ?

Perchance

Thy slave, though powerless to take the oar,

Might yet by sympathy reduce the waves.

IPH.—Call not thyself a "slave," dear girl, for he

Who hath but sympathy within his heart

Sways with a sceptre greater than a king's,

And makes a heaven equal to a god's.
But come, I will disclose my heart to thee.

I am unhappy in my duty here,
And being so, I long to turn my steps

Towards Greece again, to friends, to peace, to home.

CELE.—Dear lady (thou so kind), what dost thou say ?

Thy very thought would impious seem to all.

The great Diana, whom as priestess thou

Dost serve, would surely thy desertion meet

With some dire punishment—it might be death !

IPH.—“ Death ” ?

Ah, I know not which is really death—

The sojourn here where pain and joy in turn

Dissemble and exchange each other's mask,

Thus making life a traitor to itself ;

Or that all-changeless and all-lasting state

Which Plato and the wise assure us wait

Beyond the veil now drawn before our eye !

CELE.—Oh, my sweet mistress, throw such thoughts
away

And let thy former sunny smile again

Dispel the shadows !

Thou at least canst hope.

IPH.—“ Hope ” ! This hath giants made of fearful men,

And men of women—gods of mortals, too !

Yea, it hath been a torch within their hearts

To fire their blood to greater deeds than Troy's !

“ Hope ” ! I, then, will ignite that Ætna in

My heart, so shall its fire—as crystal-like

As yonder star—rekindle weary life,

And light to freedom, happiness, and home !

Come, true Celese. Though the night appears,

Still there's a growing star above the sea. (*Pointing.*)

So, too, there is a star-rise in my heart !

[*Exit, with CELESE.*

Enter PYREUS and MIONE (the former — of somewhat stout proportions—being in a slightly intoxicated state, and the latter carrying a garland of flowers, and from whom, as they enter, PYREUS takes the garland and places it grotesquely about his head.

PYRE.—Nay—hold thy clatter !

Women, women ? Why
What are they ? What their errand ? What their
use ?

The gods but sent them as a menace and
A sore to noble man.

[*Patting his breast at "man," and, in the act of which,
falling down.*]

MIONE (*assisting him to his feet*).—Pyreus, thou
Art most unkind. Say, rather, woman is
A *help* to man.

PYRE. A help ? (*With bombast*) Brave
man needs not
Assistance from the weak !

MIONE (*gaily*). Again thou'rt wrong.
Why, but for me thou mightst be struggling still
To raise thy bulky self from off the ground.

PYRE.—What, *thou* aid me ? By Bacchus, if I
thought

I owed a debt to woman for her help,
I'd seek Charybdis' or wild Scylla's arms !

MIONE.—Thy god doth teach thee strange philosophy !

PYRE.—“ Philosophy ” ? There's more philosophy
In wine than woman. Wine doth cheer the heart,
Make troubles vanish, soothe our pains, and act
The sweetest anodyne to every ill.
Wine ? Take the sun himself away and what
Would this dependent earth resemble ? Why,
A boat without its sail, a sail without
A wind, a wind without its favouring help,—
One long vast wilderness without a sign
Of life—all withered, parched——

(*With sudden inspiration*) parched——

(*Putting hand to throat*) very parched.

MIONE.—Pyreus, thou art too forgetful of
A woman's claims.

When man (*mimicking his bombast*),
most god-like man—

Who launches boats to scorn the lethal waves—
Whose valour crushes kingdoms, and whose hand

An ægis bears to make the laws of earth—
 Whose genius is one rare Promethean spark
 Whereby he strips the veil of heaven and reads
 The oracles and archives of the gods—
 He who out-masters Ajax and defies
 The very forces governing his life,—
 When he, I say,

[*Acting the significance of her references.*
 hath but a headache, or

A pin-prick, or a fit of choler, then
 This pinnacle of greatness, MAN,
 [Slapping PYREUS on the shoulder, who then stumbles and
 falls.]

contracts

In quality, from independence falls,
 And sighs and supplicates to woman—who
 Becomes a goddess in his craven eye—
 [As PYREUS extends his hand towards her to assist him up.
 To be his *help*, his counsellor, his friend !

PYRE.—You women have chameleons' tongues for
 length,

And vie with them in changing virtues' tints.

MIONE.—Thou art too bitter, brave Pyreus.

See (*pointing towards the star*)

I'll teach thee, by yon shining jewel, how
 To estimate the worth and place of us.
 E'en as that god-ignited light shines out
 To save the world from darkness——

PYRE. (*blinking*). One, dost say ?

I see a multitude of dancing stars——

MIONE.—Oh, thou art past reclaiming !

Come, thou brave,

Thou doughty man—to deeds of valour come !

A woman leads thee on——

[PYREUS evinces some alarm.
 To wine !

PYRE. (*with satisfaction, and placing his arm around her,
 whilst gesticulating with his lips at "wine"*).—Lead
 on !

[*They both exit.*

IPHIGENIA *re-enters slowly, and when on top step, she plucks some flowers : a bird, as though disturbed at her approach, rises from near her hand, and flies away, over the sea, IPHIGENIA the while making a movement as though to follow it with outstretched arms : when the bird disappears, IPHIGENIA, with a sigh, dejectedly returns to the plucking of flowers.*

ORESTES and PYLADES *stealthily enter, unperceived by IPHIGENIA.*

ORES.—So, Pylades, through all the storms and waves
We land on Taurica's far shore at last.

PYLA.—Ay, and through all the storms and waves of life
Hath our undying mutual friendship passed.

ORES. (*taking both of PYLADES' hands in his own*).—

Ne'er, Pylades, till now have I been taught

That souls can have a kinship as the flesh.

Man's brother is his mother's gift to him,

But, oh, a *friend* is heaven's special prize !

PYLA.—Within our lives no morrow can arrive,

For night shall ne'er divide our bright to-day.

ORES.—No man can break the seal impressed by Fate,
Or nullify the bond writ on the soul.

[*Releasing PYLADES' hands, and looking around.*

But, Pylades, my task demands my speed.

PYLA.—That task is great—its execution grave.

ORES.—The greater merit for the greater task.

'Tis nobler to attempt than to refrain.

But see, on yon majestic rock there rests

The statue of th'Ephesian virgin queen,

And which I have to carry back to Greece.

PYLA.—The place seems solitary, sheltered too.

ORES.—I think thou, Pylades, hadst best retire

Back to our ship and wait till first I've made

A survey of the spot e'er we proceed,

And I will signal thee to join me when

I'm ready for thine aid.

PYLA. But why should I

Retire from danger leaving thee alone

To face it ?

I refuse, Orestes,—*friend* !

[*Grasping both of ORESTES' hands in his own.*

ORES.—Staunch Pylades, as, too, a mutual friend,
I would not have thee risk thine own dear life.
When danger comes it must confront us twain
When hand in hand together and before
We can discern its rude approach ; else ne'er
Will I permit thee to divide my risk.
Besides, this task is set for me alone,
Else might I rouse the anger of the gods.
What mortal can oppose the will of heaven ?

PYLA. (*releasing ORESTES' hands*).—I fear, Orestes,
with a heavy heart

I must obey, and leave thee for awhile :
But with an eye keen as the eagle's when
He sweeps the air in famished quest of prey,
I'll watch around and be thy sentinel.

ORES.—My other self,—co-wearer of my heart,—
Thou glass reciprocal with me wherein
We each are mirror'd and each self exchanged,—
I'll join thee soon ; and see, the night is fast
Approaching, so I must unto my task.
But, Pylades, this ground is sacred 'gainst
All strangers, though the gods permit myself
To tread it in pursuance of my task.
Then, stand thou at a distance and await
My call to thee should I thy succour need.

PYLA.—'Tis well, Orestes ; I'll withdraw and wait
To hear thy signal.

May'st thou thrive with speed.

[*They part—ORESTES turns towards steps, and PYLADES goes off in opposite direction.*]

ORES. (*soliloquising*).—Né'er let my heart once falter—
[*Suddenly perceiving* IPHIGENIA, *who at the moment has, in the act of plucking the flowers, erected herself, and stands looking off towards the sea.*]

Ah, what form
 Confronts me, softly glowing fresh with life ?
 So blooms the lily on its virgin stalk
 Extending purity and lending heaven
 The die of beauty for empyreal things !
 So perfect and divine in mould, she might

Herself a goddess be thus loitering
 To breathe with Dian chasteness on the earth.
 Perchance she's Merope who humbly quits
 Her heavenly seat to watch the wondering earth.
 Thus Hero stood to light Leander's wave.
 I fear to stay, though thus to gaze on her
 Is viewing heaven with its veil aside !

[*Concealing himself.*]

IPH. (*soliloquising*).—How lovely rolls the tide ! How
 swell the waves

As, kissed by dawning moonlight, they pulsate
 In ceaseless, dazzling animation, like
 Unfettered spirits flitting o'er the scene
 In trembling haste towards the horizon's verge
 Of Immortality's unbounded shore !
 More purple grows the sky—more pure the stars
 Burn vestal lamps before the shrine of heaven.
 All nature feels a new virginity.

[*Descends steps.*]

ORES. (*aside*).—She cometh. Now mine enterprise is
 checked.

I'll wait and watch until I am alone. [*Retires.*]

IPH.—I *should* be happy, ay, and grateful, too.

Diana, in kind sympathy, preserved
 My life at Aulis and then honoured me
 By making me her priestess on this shore.
 But 'tis my nature's weakness to revolt
 Against the duties of mine office. How
 Can I make sacrifice of fellow lives ?

[*Drawing a poniard.*]

How poise this knife against a victim ?

[*Replacing same.*]

How—

The greatest task of all—distinction make
 'Twixt kin and strangers ?

When conflicting thoughts

Possess the mind, all energy is lost—
 The faculty of sense is numbed—the force
 Determining our action lies asleep,—
 We then seem cowards standing on the brink

Of some dark chasm fearing both to leap
And to remain !

I *will* be strong, and shew
That woman when determined can become
A man in courage and in will a queen !
[*Is turning to go, when she suddenly observes the statue,
then starts back with a distressed cry.*]

Mine oath ! Mine oath ! I've sworn devotion of
My life to great Diana—she who saved
That life, which Calchas would have sacrificed !
Ye gods, how shall I act ? How shall I choose
What step to take ?

I stand betwixt my love
And duty—like a fainting traveller
In feverish pause between two stern cross-roads !
What children are we when distress appears !
We grope in fright as shadows close around !
'Tis immaterial grief makes giants quake,
And ranks the gladiator with us all !
[*Glancing at statue.*

She calls ! Diana from her marble speaks,
[*Observing now the rising moon.*
And from her radiant seat in heaven commands !
What shall I do ?

My brain is giddy with
Perplexing thoughts and changing hopes and fears !
Ah, there's the sea—the waves as wild as are
My thoughts !

Ye gods, undo this frenzy, else
In swift contagious madness I become
One of those feverish waves and dash myself
Against th'oblivious rocks !

Mine oath ! My bond !
How can I tear the compact ?—break the seal ?—
High Jove, quench thou this furnace in my brain !—
[*Catching sight again of statue.*
My mistress ! She'll be merciful and kind !—

[*Rushing up and kneeling before statue.*
Oh, great Diana, queen of night and of the stars,
Thy mortal priestess is too weak to keep

Her maiden vow ! She swore in blindness then !
 We all are brave, and boast of lions' strength
 Until th' impartial test proclaims the truth !
 Nay, if the saving of my simple life
 Made such a mighty bond betwixt us twain,
 Oh, I now pray thee break the frightful seal
 And take, ay take, the forfeit of my life !

[Sinks down in a swoon.]

ORESTES *re-enters* (cautiously).

ORES.—Now to my task.

[Suddenly perceiving IPHIGENIA's form.]

But who is lying there ?

I'll see.

[Approaching her.]

She sleepeth—yea, the living figure sleeps.
 I'll wake her, and then speak.

And yet, oh, yet,

So heavenly doth she rest, and so much like
 The spirit lingering in its last farewell
 Upon the mortal brow of beauty young,
 That I e'en dare not desecrate the scene.—
 Dream on.—

I hear a footstep ! I'll withdraw
 Again till loneliness shall favour me.

[Retires.]

Re-enter PYREUS, followed by MIONE, in argument (the former carrying a large wine cup, but neither of them observing IPHIGENIA).

MIONE.—I tell thee that the king is much incensed
 At thine unseemly conduct.

PYRE. Let him frown.

If kings can govern not their tempers small,
 How can they govern kingdoms ?

MIONE. Even kings

Are only mortals, like ourselves, and bend
 To nature—that arch-mistress o'er us all.
 They have their aches and pains, their weaknesses :
 Their majesty begins and ends in clay ;
 Their sway is margined by earth's little plot :
 Their will, a bubble quivering in the storm :

Their law becomes revoked at Fate's caprice :

Their sceptre is of metal that doth rust :

Their riches melt like vapours in the wind :

Their crown, the gilded front of care and fear :

Their castles crumble at the touch of Time :

Their master, Death: their brightest throne, the tomb!

PYRE. (*who, unknowingly and through clumsily holding the cup, causes all the wine to gradually escape, during his following speech*).—Then I decline to be a king. I thank

The gods that I'm a plain and simple man.

Give me but bread and health and peace and friends,

I'd learn more joy than even kings could teach !

MIONE.—My good Pyreus, pray bethink thee. Thou

Omittest from thine invent'ry of joy

Thy chiefest luxury and virtue—wine.

PYRE. (*caressing the cup*).—Wine ! Oh, unpardonable fault of mine !

I thank thee, good Mione, that thou dost

Remind me of my chiefest virtue (*elevating the cup*) wine !

We're truly in a sorry state to need

A hint to practise virtues we profess !

I'll drink thy health, sweet Mione.

May

Thy days be plentiful ; thy joys complete ;

Thy sorrows melt like wax before the sun ;

Thy health be like the springtide, bright and fresh ;

Thy friends as true as stars are to the sky ;

Thy life as sweet as honey in the comb.

[*About to drink.*

By Bacchus, there's no wine ! 'Tis gone !

MIONE.

Ha, ha !

What wilt thou do, thy nectar being spent ?

But still, thou good and kind Pyreus, I

Accept thy pledge and thank thee just the same

For all thy wishes thou hast *drily* drunk.

PYRE.—Nay, girl, it is no jest—the loss of wine

Is serious. Like the sun, it re-creates—

It wakes dull nature—animates the heart——

MIONE.—And puts the senses all to sleep.

PYRE. "To sleep"?

Say, rather, senses sleep without it. I

Shall fall asleep unless I speedily

Refill the cup.

MIONE. Methinks thou'st had enough

Already, good Pyreus.

PYRE. That depends

Upon the strict translation of the word

"Enough."

MIONE. Well, *I* interpret it as thus—

Enough of anything is gained when we

With reason feel our nature satisfied.

PYRE.—My dear Mione, thou art wise indeed

And e'en couldst school, with thy philosophy,

Old Bacchus, for he does not know "Enough."

He ne'er restricts the meaning of that word,

Nor I restrict the measure of this cup.

But come, Mione, and I'll show to thee

Mine own translation of the word "Enough."

[*Sings, as he and MIONE exit.*]

The grape hangs blushing on the tree

Beneath the sun's impassioned kiss ;

But 'tis to taste and not to see,

Like many another thing of bliss.

IPH. (*recovering and soliloquising*).—Ah, I awake ! I must have swooned.

(*Rising*) 'Tis night.

How still and calm ! No breath upon the wave.

The leaves of yonder myrtle slumber too—

They quiver not as all the breezes lie

Hushed in the hallowed cradle of the night.

Ye beauteous waves that roll in blueish pomp

And swell with pride of power and mastery,

Thy bubbles throwing on the shore to burst,

Like Time his atoms meting carelessly,—

Ye which can bear vain man as though he were

Thy foamy element, but yet disdain'st

To bear the imprints of his mortal steps,—

Ye seem like some eternal principles
Of deity, becoming gods yourselves
In majesty, in awe, in echoed power !
— I love to watch ye, and to hear thy voice
As, like to some Gigantes revelling,
Ye mount imperiously the airy space,
And make the scene your own republic sphere.
Roll on.

But tell me, oh, thou blue Euxine,
If thou wilt bear the hopes I cast on thee
To that bright shore where they shall live and be
Dear heralds of perpetual happiness ?
Ah, nay, thou canst not buoy such things !
And yet I have as many such as thou
Hast baser bubbles which thy crest conveys
As insubstantial legacies to earth.
I sigh,—the breezes waft it back to me !
All-cold and stern thou art—thou canst not feel
For any bosom heaving, like thy wave,
With grief, or pain, or loneliness : *that* tide
Must flow without one borrowed ebb from thee,
Until its trembling treasure-heart is dashed
Against the mediating rock and breaks !
Ah, I have watched thee, liquid sapphire, when
Aurora oped her silvery door to wake
All nature, aided by her sparkling eye
Shot with rubescent tints—like a pink pearl
Whose chastened blush but makes its beauty rare ;
Or as a goddess' snowy cheek doth loan
The lambent beam from heaven's gold lamp sublime ;
Like the rose reflex from our altar fire
At temple shrine when sunset gilds their flame,—
Yea, then I've seen thy rippling surface take
The form of many day-dawns, that each wave,
Celestially thus kindled, seemed to bear
The torch divine to light the gods to earth.
I've seen thee when Apollo's molten car
Fled in meridian glory over thee ;
And then, thou nature's mirror, thou becam'st
Thyself a god in splendour, and I deemed

Thy silvery wavelets floating to my feet
 Were crowns of bliss some goddess sent for me.
 I see thee, crystal mate, as eve's tired god
 Unhorses now his chariot crimson-draped,
 And view the ruddy glow (as though thou wert
 Some prostrate Ætna dying in thy fire)
 Dance on thy prouder crest, forgetting that
 Thou art a thief in thus, Promethean-like,
 Usurping light divine to give thee life.
 And, oh, I've seen thy brow reflective wear
 More dazzling glories than Alcmene knew,
 When my great mistress Luna through the door
 Of heaven peeped (as vestal of the stars)
 And with her hallowed aspect awed the world
 To peaceful slumber and solemnity !
 And then, ay then—like some inverted sky—
 Thou wor'st the dazing crown of power divine,
 As though the gods in synod all had come
 Discussing immortality with thee !
 Oh, give to me the lusty pinions of
 The albatross to mount thy current o'er
 That I may trace thy fount and with thee spring
 Eternal in commingling joy and power !
 (*Speaking as with sudden thought*) But I must to my
 vestal duties in
 The temple.

Great Diana, lo, I come !

[*Is going, but is met by* THOAS, *who enters.*

THOAS.—Mycenæ's maid and princess, priestess,
 hail !

IPH.—Health, monarch, always unto thee !

THOAS. How speeds
 Thine office ?

IPH. Tardily. The altar still
 Remains as virgin as my hand from blood.

THOAS.—No fault of thine, I trust.

IPH. Nay, king,

For I to duty am as firmly bound
 As was the thief of heavenly fire when chained
 Unto th'infested stone in Caucasus.

THOAS.—But hearts sometimes droop cowards 'neath
the test.

IPH.—Doubt not the courage of the daughter of
Great Agamemnon till thou hast good cause.

THOAS.—I meant not to deride thy valour thus,
For I believe it vainly but contends
With thy rare beauty for the mastery.

IPH.—Thou'rt gracious, king.

I have to keep mine oath.
(*Evincing some fear*) Yet "death"! There's *some-*
thing in that potent word
Which at its sounding shocks the placid soul
And wounds the human thought and stings our
pride!

THOAS.—"Death"! That is bliss when great Diana
calls.

IPH.—Ah, monarch, there's a voice within the soul
Which calls, not loudly, but in whispers clear,
And echoes when Diana's voice is still.
More gently breathes it in the mortal mind
Than did the marble bosom as it warmed
With virgin pulse before Pygmalion's eye:
More wooing than the Orphean echo which
Charmed into gentleness the Furiæ.
Great king, hast *thou* not felt this halo too,
Which steals athwart intelligence, just like
This evening's breeze that sits with hallowed
grace

On yonder poppy leaving it a kiss
Of new vitality,—or like the beam
Of chastest day-dawn illuming the brow
Of Dian's statue there, as though it dropt
Its dew to teach the goddess e'en herself
There's *something* more sublime beyond the stars?

THOAS.—Art thou Iphigenia?

IPH. That's the name
They call me by at home.

THOAS. Thy pardon, then;
I thought thou wast some stranger, hearing thee
Discoursing on a theme as foreign to

My mind as it must so be made to thine.
I wish not thus to cool thine ardour, but
Were any of thy kin, by unknown chance,
To touch upon this strand in ignorance
Of their too final doom, wouldst thou extend
The penalty alike to them? For this
Forms parcel of thine oath.

IPH. (*with some alarm*).—They will not come—
They have no business on this distant shore—
They do not fear my safety, for they know
The great Diana is my guardian still.

THOAS.—I mean, they may have other duties which
Will bring their sails near to this coast and then
Be tempted to alight to meet thyself
In filial love.

IPH. That will not—must not—be.

THOAS.—We cannot lift the veil of hidden time
To gaze upon the revelation there.
We are not gods, and cannot bid the Fates
Annul their laws. E'en kings are servants too,
Not masters of, their destiny.

IPH. If—if—

In such event—— But nay, it cannot be!

THOAS.—Thou talkest now of “ifs.” This scarcely
blends

With all thy protests but a moment hence.

IPH. (*with some indignation*).—The test hath not yet
been applied. Till then

I still am priestess here.

THOAS. I only trust

Thou wouldst not falter should the trial come.

IPH.—Reserve thy doubts till thou hast better cause.

THOAS.—Again I say I hope thou wouldst be firm,
For thou must know *I* have a duty too.

IPH.—I read some threat beneath those words.

THOAS. No threat.

I only would recall thy mind unto
A task devolving on myself shouldst thou
Once fail in thine.

IPH.—Ah, stranger, I would thank thy kindness much;

ORES.—Why, then, didst thou revolt not at the oath?

ORES.—Thy lot is sad—thy fortune most unkind.

IPH.—But doth the willow not turn back to weep

ORES.—Then, why remain within this charnel house?

IPH.—Dear stranger (though thy voice is scarcely strange)

ORES. By all the gods,

If thou (so like a sister lost to me)

But say the word, this Grecian blade and arm

[Drawing sword.

Shall dearly strike for thee and liberty,
Or I for thee will be the sacrifice !

IPH.—All blessing, noble youth, be thine, but, oh,
 I tremble 'twixt my wish and duty, like
 The gasping breath 'tween life and death ; or like
 The rainbow quaking half in sun and gloom ;
 Yea, like the shivering star 'twixt night and morn !
 Greece ! Speak, oh, speak again of Greece ! Dear
 home !

ORES. (*replacing sword*).—Is Greece *thy* home, then ?

IPH. Ah, how swallow-like

I'd roam those moonlit waves and make a nest
 Within my Southern clime and take love's Spring !
 Oh, could I send one briefest message there,
 I'd be so happy ! But alas, my hope
 To either dwell there, or a message send,
 Is like a new plucked flower in a vase,
 Which though 'tis daily watered, slowly droops
 And in its foreign vessel sweetly dies !

ORES.—Speak, maiden, and whate'er thy message be,
 This faithful breast or hand shall carry it.

IPH.—Ah, kindly youth, thou dost forget thou canst
 Not ever once return from this too fatal shore !
 Thy doom is fixed !

Greece ! Weep with me for Greece !

ORES.—Too many tears are shed in Greece's homes—
 Too many hearts are split, and bosoms cleft
 Already at the Gorgon-headed Troy,
 Where Death, the great Colossus, doth bestride
 The busy scene like some immortal god !

IPH.—I'll take thy chiding, stranger, and will dry
 Mine eyes ; but, oh, to wipe the tear away
 Is not to seal the fountain of the heart !

ORES.—Maid, pr'ythee cease ; such language ill becomes
 A daughter of brave Greece. Weep not nor sigh
 For Greece—the gods are with her !

IPH. But with me ?

ORES.—Thou'rt favoured as a priestess, art thou not ?

IPH.—What honours can rekindle buried joys ?

ORES.—Drown grief within oblivion,—*force* thy smiles.

IPH.—Such momentary sunbeams may be forced,
 But, oh, the heart must wear the shadows still !

ORES.—Thou sweet, though sad, philosopher, hast
thou

No oracle which can the secret tell
Where we may find the spring of Happiness
And in its bubbling stream float down through life
As smoothly as fair Juno's peacocks sailed
To draw her queenly chariot into heaven ?

IPH.—When Agamedes and Trophonius asked
Apollo for the happiest gift of all,
They learnt it but existed in their death.

ORES.—Dull consummation, then, of happiness !
I'll trace *mine* out in *life*, and rest content
If that be deemed but one small moiety !

IPH.—Bethink thee, youth, of thy too present doom,
And say farewell to Greece thou'lt see no more !

ORES.—What power can stay me ? See my sails now
wait

Impatient on the beach, and I perceive
No danger—none at least which this good steel
Can tremble at or turn aside from fear.

IPH.—Have I not told thee of mine office here ?

[*Drawing poniard.*]

Diana lifts and guides my hand to strike
The helpless victim of her sacrifice.

ORES.—With ease could I disarm thee did I choose.

IPH.—Diana's power is such that she transfers
To strangers that same death they would deal me.

ORES.—Perchance, then, thou'rt not of the influence
Of earth, but art some nymph in sacred work
Appointed, though unwillingly, to do
Thine office in the midst of mortals like
Myself. If so, this mortal humbly begs
From thee forgiveness——

IPH. (*replacing weapon*). Thou dost wrong thyself,
For I, like thou, am mortal too.

ORES. Maid, so
Are all in outward show and human frame :
But there's an essence hidden deep within
Which is not of the order of the flesh
Or earth, and which in some fine natures forms

The precious link of them to heaven (more pure
Than that gold chain which once held Juno there)—
Nay, 'tis that essence of the self which is
The pre-divinity of chosen lives.

Thou, priestess, dost reflect the gods' abode !

IPH.—I'll profit by thy kind philosophy
(Of which methinks I've often dreamed myself).
But see,—like molten silver, Luna now
Doth blaze with brighter splendour, telling us
The night advanceth——

ORES. Priestess, and my death !

IPH. (*in a distressed whisper*).—"Death !"

[*Looking fearfully around.*]

Stay. A thought, e'en like a dewdrop bright
At evetide lighting on the drowsy rose
To bring it new and sweet vitality,
Dawns on my mind.

If thou wilt take for me
A loving message back to Greece and home,
I'll spare thy youthful, precious life, and bless
Thee thus and, oh, in other ways !

ORES. 'Tis not,
Thou godlike maid, that I should tremble at
My doom (a Greek's one creed is fearlessness)—
Nay, hath my task not been to hang my life
But on a daintier web than spiders weave,
In daring to approach this fatal coast
To bring away Diana's statue there——

IPH. (*starting*).—Great Jove ! What sayest thou, rash
stranger ?

ORES. That
Apollo's Delphian oracle prescribed
Such act of mine ere I be purified
Of matricide—(which, all ye gods, take note,
This head and hand but deemed 'twas nobly done)—
Or be delivered from the Furies' power.
Then, 'tis not from one throe of fear I crave
To be thy happy herald back to Greece :
But still, thou earthly nymph, I humbly thank
Thee deeply for preserving thus my life.

Prepare, then, my commission, and upon

[Laying his hand on sword hilt.

This Grecian steel a Greek now registers

An oath to faithfully obey it all !

IPH.—My parents both are now, alas, no more,

But, oh, there is my brother—brave and good

And loving.

Take, kind stranger, then, my word

To him—to dear Orestes still at home.

ORES.—“ Orestes ” ?

Gods ! Look close into mine eyes

And let me rivet thine !

My sister ! Our

Iphigenia !

But it cannot be,

Unless from the Elysian Fields, where bloom

Undying flowers, thy dear spirit hath

Returned to fill the virtuous void on earth !

I stand amazed !

Oh, loving sister, speak !

IPH. (*falling on his neck*).—My words are choked ! I scarce can speak at all !

Dear brother, thou must know Diana saved

Thy sister from the sacerdotal knife,

And for that gift of life I was ordained

Her priestess at the shrine on this far shore.

ORES.—Iphigenia—sister, lost and found—

Oh, come and flee away with me and quit

This sepulchre ! Again in sunny Greece

Thou'lt live in peace, in virtue, innocence.

Thy little hand (which, like a lily, wears

The virgin snow refined by heaven's light)

Shall keep as spotless and as white as is

The first-born streak of pure Aurora's dawn!

Come.

See,—the gentle, wooing night enchants

The waves to hallowed quietude, and makes

Their ripples our bright lanterns back to
home!

IPH.—But Thoas : he's unmerciful ; and did

He once perceive my taking flight, it would
Mean instant death !

ORES. Not while at thy dear side
I stood—thy brother and a Greek !

IPH. Ha ! Hark !
Methought I heard a step !

Yea, 'tis the king !
See where he cometh !

Oh, my brother, haste
Away, or hide thyself, else it will mean
An instant death to both of us !

ORES. (*drawing sword*). Firm as
Yon granite rock I'll stand beside thee if
Thou wilt renounce thy sickly office here
And sail with me back to our Grecian home !

IPH.—Art thou implacable ?

Thou stay'st to die !

ORES.—I'm stern as Charon when he mounts the flood,
And tears and prayers of Love plead all in vain !

IPH.—Ye gods, assist me with your counsel now !

ORES.—Speak quickly ! Thoas' step is close on us.
Iphigenia—sister—speak ! Which shall
It be—Greece or Diana ?

Speak : he's here !

IPH.—“ Greece or Diana ” ?

ORES. Choose !

THOAS (*heard off*). Ho, priestess !

ORES. Quick !

One moment more and, sister, 'tis too late !

Choose, then,—Greece or Diana ?

THOAS (*nearer*). Priestess, ho !

IPH.—Greece !

[ORESTES takes her extended hand and kisses it, then
releases it.]

Re-enter THOAS.

THOAS.—Ha ! Who's this ? A stranger ? And with
sword

In menace drawn !

Now, by the virtuous queen
Of Ephesus and goddess of the stars,

Thy doom is sealed ! The altar waits ! Prepare,
Then, for the sacrifice.

By garb thou shouldst

Be Grecian.

ORES. Ay, and with as royal blood
As thine, but not so barb'rous.

THOAS (*drawing sword, and approaching ORESTES*).—
Threaten not,

Or Thoas might forget his nobler task,
And slay thee where thou standest—robbing thus
The great Diana of her sacrifice !

ORES.—A fitter sacrifice I'll make of thee !

[*He attacks THOAS. IPHIGENIA, drawing her weapon,
rushes between their swords.*]

IPH.—Hold ! 'Tis decreed that I alone should
shed

The blood of strangers on this sacred spot !

THOAS (*pointing to ORESTES*).—Thine office, then !
Strike at thy victim ! Quick !

[*IPHIGENIA becomes lost in agonised perplexity.*]

Thou falterest !

IPH. He is my brother !

THOAS. Ha !

And that is why thou'dst spare his votive life !

IPH.—'Tis god-like to be merciful, and more
Than god-like when man heeds a brother's tears !
Oh, let him go and take his life with him !

He'll never come again to trouble thee ;

See, here I bend a royal knee to thee,
And humbly, tearfully, beg his dear life !

ORES. (*raising her*).—Nay, sister, stand aside, and let
our blades

Be arbiters between myself and this

Proud mortal who but boasts his bravery !

IPH.—Dear brother, I could never see thee die !

Oh, let me beg thy precious life from him !

THOAS (*turning away from her*).—No prayers, no tears,
no eloquence of words

Will make me swerve from duty's regal call !

By great Diana, if thou pausest more

Than one brief instant to perform thine oath,
I must to her give thine own life for his !

IPH. (*with sudden inspiration*).—My life for his ?

Diana, take it thus !

[*Is about to stab herself, when ORESTES rushes forward, grasps her hand, snatches the weapon from her and throws it away.*]

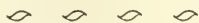
ORES.—Ye gods, forbid !—

Prepare, thou tyrant, for

The sacrifice thyself ! I'll be the priest !—

[*He and THOAS re-engage in a fierce encounter, and THOAS is ultimately slain. ORESTES returns to, and embraces, IPHIGENIA.*]

Sweet sister, thy white hand is spotless still !



SONNETS.

TO PHYLÆ.

SOFT falls the moonbeam on thine upturned face,
Celestial creature, adding purer dye
Unto the chastened white which there doth lie.
Doth grief bepaint, in vacant colour thus,
Thy languid cheek—or is it ivory
Sits there to make the snow thus emulous ?
Perchance some hand divine combines the three.
But that thy bosom heaves its pearly shells,
And life in thy blue eye serenely dwells,
Rude mortals might deem thee some goddess rare
Praxiteles in marble new did trace ;
And but for tremor of thy raiment fair
By zephyrs of the night, a spirit thou,
Born of a star, wouldst seem to mankind now.

Perchance the whispering stream beneath thy feet
Is answering thy heavenly accents soft,
And, lest they should be caught by human ear,
It far away those echoes soft doth bear :
Its iridescent hues, commingling oft,
Are but reflections from thy sky-lit eye,
Whose sparkle, too, affords its crystal face :
It copies all thy charms as it flows by,
More faithful than a Zeuxis' brush could trace.
The nightingale beneath her pinion hides
Her eye as near thy sapphire own she glides,
As though th'aerial minstrel's eye by thine
Were dazed and feared as rival now to shine.
Thou art so calm, I see thy heart's soft beat.

Thou may'st be like that Chinese changing flower
Which in the shade or night is lily-white,
But wears a blushing pink in sunny light.

Ah, lovely creature, could I be within

The breeze invisibly confined and borne
To thy dear presence (though it were a sin

To break thy saintly vigils), placid morn
Would dawn upon my soul more hallowed than
The Eastern glow to careless eye of man !

Thine eyes, upturned to heaven, kindle still
The stars with lustre that the midnight hour

Is an aurora : and, by angels' will,
The sky draws from those eyes the violet for
Its morning face to beauteous shine the more.

Thy lily hands upon a breast of light

Are clasped—like rose-buds on their stems so tight :

Perchance a silent prayer escapes from out
Its casket of pure coral-opening lids

To kin empyreal things the air about.

But that the lexicon sublime forbids

Dull clay to comprehend its language high,

I might translate such virtue's prayer of thine.

Thy curls, lit by an autumn sunset, fly

Breeze-wooded, and they around thy neck entwine.

Thy gentle breathing falls on air so light,

That thus thy sculptured throat is as a flower

That opes to heave its incense of the hour.

Thy sight for *me* is far too dear. Good-night !

TO ÆZONI.

COULD Botticelli gaze but once on thee

He'd throw his brush, then paralysed, away ;

Nor could he limn thy sweet sublimity,

As when his own Madonna saw the day.

Thine eye of blue—like the rich skyish veil

Hung o'er the Door of Heaven to shade its light—

Shines with a fire as all-celestial,

And hides a paradise : its colour might

The Virgin's robe have tintured with a dye
Of chaster azure, and upon her brow
The halo of more dovelike grace would lie,
And votaries would take a holier vow !
Thine eye (itself a Parthenos) doth glow,
Like Hero's torch, our heavenly course to show !

TO ANGELA.

WHEN Ceres traced Persephone in flight
She lit two torches in th'all-molten flames
Of fever'd Ætna each recurring night
To lighten her in searching through the world :
But, oh, dear lady, thy fired eye proclaims
(Like basilisk in magnetism curled)
More vivid life than the Sicilian mound ;
And in its soft volcano there is found
A brighter spark to light man's search for heaven
Than was by Ætna's torrid furnace given
To Ceres ! Still, for my poor self I'd be
Content if its dear lustre lighted me
To that more humble but as blissful sphere—
Thy heart ; for I would make my heaven *there* !

TO ZONEVRA.

THINE eye is sad and downcast, lady dear,
As though malignant grief its lustre veiled
And doomed some circumstance to be bewailed.
I've seen it like a wooing lightning soft
Strike on its blessed object that th'effect
Hath been of things a new creation oft,
And lit those souls which Nature did neglect.
Let not that silent contemplation now
Wean youth's pink blush and marble from thy brow,—

Too soon the iron hand of Time will rend
The roseate hue, and age's chisel sport
Its trembling point and all thy smoothness tear !
Look up, and into Heaven constant bend
Thy tender gaze, for There abide thy sort !

TO VIANTHE.

SAT yonder by the brook in pensive mood,
Beneath the myrtle's palpitating leaves
Which seem to whisper secret tales to thee,
Thou seem'st a Venus in her shell to be.
Were I less mortal I would constantly
Crave to be where that seraph-bosom heaves,
That, rocked upon it, all my human dreams
Might be celestial, and my soul away
In distance far from earth's incessant pain.
Yea, by thy side, life's many sorrowed streams
Would soon ebb back unto their fount again.
The eve already glimmers, yet 'tis day
Unbroken near thine optic's sunny ray,—
As nuns reveal beneath their sable hood.

TO HYACINTHE.

WHEN Titian limned his Magdalene sublime
Thine unborn image dwelt within his eye
And lent his brush a halo of the sky,
For thy soft aspect, maid, is so serene
And blends with the pure starlight of the scene,
That Heaven's veil seems half undrawn in thee.
Through thy dark eye an Eden bursts we see.
Thy lips are of the day-dawn's virgin pink.
Thy music-sigh takes me as on the brink

Of earth and immortality that I
Feel wooed away by breath so heavenly
Which falls upon the midnight's silent air,
Like angels' echoed whispers calling There !
But, oh, near thee, Earth is mine only clime !

TO IONEZ.

EACH Naiad hath her grotto, lovely maid,
Each Oceanide her coral cell ;
But thou, fair nature's nymph, seem'st but to dwell
So silent in a local element
Of air and all alone—a tenement
I now remember rare things solely hold—
For thou art ever hovering near the spot
Where now, 'mid fountain's play, I thee behold.
Some things there are much better when forgot,
And which, remembering, bring to keenest pain
Our mind, our heart, our soul, cured all in vain :
But, oh, thou beauteous girl, thine image made
Indelibly within my mental book,
Can fade not while 'tis quickened by a look !

TO THYRZIRA.

AND canst thou frown—thou so sublimely sweet ?
Frown on, then,—'tis but as a pearly cloud
Which folds the day in twilight with a soft
Aurora peeping from the evening's shroud.
Thy dainty hand of winnow'd snow doth oft
Beat petulantly at thy budding breast
As though to force it to an alien rest.
Thy wavelet mouth doth curl its coral slight
(Perchance to mine own lips 'twould press less tight !).
Thy little passion, lady, is unmeet—
'Tis like the tender fierceness of a dove

Which pecks the hand molesting her dear young.

Wait till thy mate brings thee his tale of love,
And then thou wilt not bite but loose thy tongue !

TO FELICIA.

WHEN Phaethon set th'ancient heavens ablaze,
The earth was kindled by the torrent flame.
Thine own sky-blueish eye in which I gaze
Is molten with a wooing fire the same,
But, oh, more softened, hallowed, and serene,—
Lit by Heaven's Sanctuary Lamp thine own hath been !
The old Chaldeans saw bright beings in
The stars ; but in thine eyes, thou lovely girl,
More worlds besparkle than rude man can know.
An August's golden sun lit thine each curl
(Though thine doth wear a stationary glow
Of such unsetting colour), and thine own
Shall be—like Berenice's silvery crown—
An added lamp to heaven illumine !

TO CLAUDIA.

ALL-LONELY girl, thus wandering in the grove
When night so darkly now is spread around,
Thou seem'st the sibyl of the spot. No sound
Escapes thy lips as thou dost saunter thus—
Like Cynosura, making one more star
To light the midnight air. When Hesperus,
To view the heavens, up Atlas wandered far,
He ne'er returned to earth, and was deemed lost
To mortals' company by being made
A constellation in th'eternal host :
His fate would surely be thine own, bright maid,
If thou perchance shouldst rove far in the night
And tempt thy kin celestials' jealous sight,
Who'd snatch the jewel for a light above !

TO PHÆZINE.

THE beauteous azure of the sky was given
To make divine Glaucopis' kindling eye.
Oh, dear Phæzine, quite as sublime a heaven
Composeth thine of violet's purest dye !
Athena's ægis lodged within her hand ;
But in thine eye *thou* carriest command.
If I should gaze in its celestial fire
And dream I thus a holier sphere aspire,
Forgive mortality more frail than thine,
For while across my path such star doth shine,
Ah, can I help but make it pilot to
A brilliant realm in twinkling, wooing blue ?
Smile on, with thy divinely molten eye
That its soft flame reveal a newer sky !

TO CELESTINE.

LIKE to a summer's golden twilight soft
That breathes a sacred halo o'er the scene,
And makes the earth a local heaven serene,
Thy hair (an affluent Ophir in itself,
Whose purer light would shame the mocking gilt
Which pillar'd Israel's Cræsus) sure had spilt
Upon it Iris's bright amber beam—
The earthly rainbow of man's hope to seem.
Though my locks, less sublime, are from night's
gulf,
And may not thus once dare to mate with thine,
Oh, sunset beauty, still let o'er me shine
Thine evening-star to usher me to heaven,—
For unto night celestial state is given
When it reveals God's dazzling star aloft !

TO ALEXINA.

DIANA'S maid was of such snowy-white
 That she was dazzling fair : but thou, dear girl,
 Art Niphean snow with spangled crystal stars
 Thy frosted chasteness all so lovely wears.
 Poppæa bathed in milk, her beauty to
 Preserve ; but Juno's alchemy changed you
 To heavenly whiteness—as her mammal spot
 Made white the lily first with purple shot.
 Some silk-worm spun thine every fairy curl
 Within the silver of a day-dawn's dew.
 Alas, the winnow'd beauteousness of you
 Must soon dissolve ; thy beauty's mornbreak-
 blush
 Through life's short day towards eve will
 glimmering rush !
 Oh, leave a star for me when comes the night !

TO IZEL.

THE dazzling blue which floats within thine eye
 Doth stray and linger where it heavenly dwells ;
 Whilst thy pale, melancholy cheek of down
 Breathes out so artfully its quickening spells,
 That knew I not the charms were dear Izel's
 And moulded humanly (in snow-chased clay)
 Thou wouldst appear angelic essence flown
 Towards earth to picture love's more hallow'd
 sway.
 Deep contemplation blanches thy rosed brow :
 Thy features' symmetry seems veiled now.
 Ah, could I feel *I* were blent with thy thought
 (That attribute empyreal) would be caught
 My soul up to the paradise it sought—
 To that bright Pole thy glance marks past the Sky !

TO PYRRHA.

THE fragile flowers of earth shoot, bloom and die,
And wear mortality like nature all :
But, oh, not so the violet of thine eye,
Which from the sky's most azure bed did fall,
For, being heavenly, their blueish glass
(Whose tears fall like those flowers' dew on grass)
Survives the winter and the night, and shines
In sapphired brilliance which thy bloom combines !
The light in them is like the morning-star
That, loitering, twinkles o'er night's purple verge
And dawn's soft lavender to light afar
Th'approaching day and all its glory urge.
The kindling flames of those celestial eyes
Are Ætna to each new Empedocles.

TO ROSETTA.

WHEN peeps the virgin beam of tender morn
With purest eye of chastened, silvery light,
The wondering earth seems then to be re-born,
And baser thoughts of man take heavenly flight.
Ah, lady, far across the mundane waste
I see *thy* tender mornbreak burst and haste
In hallowed loveliness to greet and bless
A coarser mortal who is none the less
A helpless votary to thy control
As is the lowliest flower that humbly woos
The dewdrop while bright Phosfor lights the Pole !
Dear maid, were, too, my mortal heart to lose
The kindling sunbeam of thy heavenly eye,
The orphan'd bud would prematurely die !

TO ROXANA (an Indian).

THOU ebon-tinted form, dusk as midnight
 (But midnight spangled with her brightest stars),
 Fair Nature throws a shadow o'er thy mould,
 But 'tis the shadow of the sun doth fold
Thy charms, which through thy veil seem silvery bars.
Thine eyes—black pearls—are dazzling orbs in night.
Thus Dian slept in marble, black yet bright ;
 The queen of heaven too. The hand which holds
 Thy meditative brow in its soft jet
 (Whilst heavenly poetry thine eye unfolds)
 Seems thy sole confidant. Ah, lady, yet
 Though thou art night and I a pilgrim lone,
 Shed thine all-soft aurora that each stone,
Reflecting it, my path to thee may light !

TO LUZIMA (another).

LIGHT had its birth divine from darkness dense
 That earth might have a foretaste e'en of heaven :
So doth thy beauty's shadow, maid, dispense
 The winnow'd glow which from the dark is given.
Without the night heaven's glory would not show
Through starry windows on the earth below ;
And we dull mortals, blind thus in our souls,
Could never know what light the sky controls :
 So, like a cloud gilt by the brightest star,
 Thou, lady, softly shinest from afar.
Thine eye, like Africa's black diamond,
 Is focus of earth's variegated light.
Thus love shall know, whene'er it would despond,
 That brilliant day is cradled in the night !

A CLOISTERED HEART.

A DRAMATIC ROMANCE.

CHARACTERS :

SISTER FAITH	} Nuns.	FALKARD, a physician.
SISTER ETHELDREDA		A company of nuns.
SISTER MARY		

TIME.—*The eighteenth century.*

SCENE.—*The cloisters of a convent ; showing a window.*

The curtain rises to organ music and singing at the service of Vespers (heard in distance). The singing soon ceases—the organ, which for a moment or two afterwards continues forte, diminishes into pianissimo.

A small procession of nuns enters slowly, and then exits in the opposite direction. SISTERS FAITH, ETHELDREDA and MARY are in the rear of the procession, the former being the last, and who momentarily raises her eyes whilst clasping her hands, and heaves a deep-drawn sigh. (The organ here ceases.)

SISTER MARY (*pausing suddenly*).—*Maria, Sister !
Whence that volumed sigh ?*

*So sad, it might have been the breathful pang
The Magdalene's fond bosom uttered at
The empty tomb !*

SISTER FAITH. *Thou, Sister, sayest well ;
For thus, with a regretful, loving sigh,
I linger at my heart's now empty tomb !
It once conserved a love until it was
Bereft and stolen from me, and by her
Who till that hour loved me both deep and long
(And she was cousin to me). Oh, to think*

That such a love of hers from nature born
 Should change to hate of me and love for him !—
 Ah, Phyllis, I forgive thy treachery,
 But ask thy *God* thy *murder* to forgive !

[SISTER ETHELDREDA, at "*Phyllis*", starts, and at the second "*forgive*" utters a slight shriek, and quickly draws her veil.]

MARY.—Nay—*Benedicite*—not that great crime !

FAITH.—And by a woman, too : she who was deemed
 The angel of our household sent to bless.

Yet, Sister, we are told that in high Heaven
 E'en angels were transformed to demons once.

MARY.—Dear Sister, may I hear thy sadful tale
 (Though *Vespers* being o'er, I fear that both
 Are risking penance for a breach of rule) ?

FAITH.—If I may grate upon thy pious ear
 With such a story of the sinful world
 Without these holy walls, dear nun, thou shalt.
 His name was Harold—mine is Isabel.

[ETHELDREDA—who at "*Harold*" has started and turned to look towards FAITH—now at "*Isabel*" exclaims aside : "*My God, 'tis she !*" and exits hurriedly.]

We met in childhood on the same dear hearth
 (He, too, my cousin was) and all we three
 Grew like three mated blossoms on one stalk.

[The window slowly opens inwards, and ETHELDREDA appears and listens—her veil back.]

The spring-time of our budding lives was passed
 In sunshine : but with summer came a blight—
 A most unseasonable, killing blight.

Dear Harold when he came to twenty-five
 (I being but eighteen) a promise drew
 From me that I would be his own dear wife
 In two short years from then. And Phyllis too
 (Who then was twenty) felt so happy at
 Our youthful troth that she did all she could,
 It seemed, to add to our new happiness.
 All—all was blissful and so sweet, we dreamt
 No night could mantle such a day as ours.

But—like the breath of an ungentle frost
That falls as light as heavenly dew
Upon the bud, yet killing all its scent—
E'en she, *our* Phyllis, gently breathed upon
Our love, and, oh, the full-blown rose then died !
He and myself had only one more day
To be apart, and when the bridal morn
Dawned into light—the light to sunshine (like
The soul emerging from the midnight tomb,
Each star its footstep to more brilliant vaults)—
I rose and shook my gloomy slumber off
And hurried to the nuptials of my heart :
But, horror ! suddenly he died, 'twas said,
Before the break of that all-fateful day !

MARY.—Nay, Sister, thou must not distress thyself
By thus reciting thine unhappy tale.
Pray let us go, and talk of brighter themes.

FAITH (*unheeding, and continuing*).—Methinks I live
again upon that solemn morn
Ten years ago. I'm too excited to
Repose upon my pillow. Through the dark,
I paint in thought our altar decked with flowers,
And wed mine anxious sweetheart joyfully.
The wooing day-dawn's tender birth (like that
Soft-glowing spark of inspiration o'er
The mortal soul) doth through my lattice show
And seem like Heaven Her blessing glancing thus.
Expanding more now glows the hallowed light.
I rise impatiently and cast my hopes
Upon the bosom of that gushing dawn
(Like flowers folded to the breast to die,
Thus making love its own dear monument).
I'm ready now : the door is open thrown :
In rushes Phyllis : her dark eye—as 'twere
A lightning flash in midnight—gleams in mine
(And, sooth, I deem it strange her eye is dry) :
She trembles—or but feigns to,—and her voice
Falls like the breeze o'er waters, brokenly,
But with its music ringing still, not as
The tone of sympathetic love indeed.

Her hair is wilder than her eye or lip,
 For its black tresses float about the air,
 As heavy clouds flee from heaven's bursting light.
 "Dear Isabel" (I tremble at the sound),
 "Thy Harold—oh, I cannot speak!" she cries,
 Then hides her face within her hands, and sobs.
 A pang—more keen than Cephalus's dart
 Through Procris' breast—shoots through mine aspen
 heart!

Her silence is all-eloquence to me,
 As when we gaze on th'angel's marbled wing
 Symbolically spread in fondness o'er
 Some lost one, and by its hushed coldness learn
 Th'immortal truth!

MARY. Dear Sister, thou art faint.

Pray now retire and seek some needed rest.

FAITH.—Nay, kindly Sister; now my tale is nigh
 All told.—

In frensy I clasp Phyllis to
 My fevered arms, and speak in silence (for
 The halo, like a damp, material pall,
 Encircling me hath made me almost dumb),—
 "Dear Phyllis, speak, oh speak, though that the sound
 Knell all my joys, my hopes, my life, away!"
 I cling upon her neck until she speaks,
 But all too briefly she replies and says:
 "Thy Harold, coz, will meet thee late to-day,
 For he is——" That dark word I never hear,
 As I fall fainting at the darker fear!
 When I awake, still decked in bridal silk
 (Rude mockery!—as when we place a rose
 Within a costly vase, to sweetly droop)
 I learn he has been found dead in his bed!
 "Dead," did I say? Nay—nay, but murdered!
 Doubts, circumstances, fears, all truly point
 Black fingers to his poisoner—one so fair.

MARY.—How strange is truth! It oft a liar seems!

FAITH (*continuing*).—She disappeared, and not a word
 Was heard of her when I came here.

I was

An orphan, sharing her paternal home,
 And had no parents' love to keep me there :
 So I at once ran from that roof and came
 Where peace, and love, and sympathy exist,—
 Took those strict vows which wed me here instead !
 Such is my tale, dear Sister,—such the heart
 Which (like not to my carnal face) can wear
 No convent veil. But, oh, that orphaned heart
 Is as the sanctuary lamp that burns before
 Our church's altar, for I tend the flame
 Of love to his dear memory ; and I'll
 Ne'er tire to be his vestal, until——

[Sobs check her concluding word.

ETHEL. (*aside, and sharply, but noiselessly, closing window on herself*).—Death !

MARY.—Take comfort, Sister, thou may'st wed him yet,
 For past these walls an Altar Higher stands
 Where thou canst consummate thy nuptial joy.

FAITH.—As loving hearts combine beyond this pole,
 Mine own, betrothed on earth, shall join its mate
 In beautier Elysian Fields than those
 Far past the Stygian shore where Helen stood
 Th'immortal bride of her Achilles !

MARY. But

This Phyllis,—what was deemed her end ?

FAITH.—That she was dead. Some thought she fled
 abroad.

[A gong is heard in distance.

But oft in visions I behold her still :

She floats before me like a figured cloud

Before the moon then by her shadow quenched.

Re-enter ETHELDREDA—*veil down—who crosses in front of FAITH and MARY, and exits.*

MARY.—There strikes thine hour to watch. The Sister
 hath

Already passed, and left her place for thee.

Go, Sister, and may our Madonna keep

Her vigils o'er thy head !

Ave Maria !

[*She crosses herself, then exits.*

FAITH (*also crossing herself*).—*Ave Maria !*

[*She remains for a moment in this position, as if in silent prayer, then, with a sigh, hastily exits, and an interior opens, showing the High Altar with accessories, including a red sanctuary lamp, FAITH kneeling before it at her watch.*]

Enter ETHELDREDA (*veil up*).

ETHEL. (*soliloquising aside*).—So, duped Isabel,
We meet again !

The nun's attire suits best
The virgin lover's bridal train ! Ha—ha !
Watch—meditate—do penance—*Glorias* sing,
That censer o'er thy head, which burns its flame
Of holy constancy, shall lend thy life
(Now flickering, like the worm's strict - dated
glow)

Not one small ray to make coeval thine.
Thou'rt dangerous e'en here—as is a star
Above the harbour to the mariner,
Which lights not all the perils on his way.
'Tis well thou and the world assume I'm dead,—
That little happiness is left me yet ;
'Twill aid me, too ; for, unwed Isabel,
I—Phyllis—have one final task to do
Ere I can draw the breath of safety here.—
How strange a freak of fate to guide the steps
Of both of us to this one, self-same spot !
Yet so it is : though we would often scheme
And plot and suffer to evade the eye
Of Nemesis, our very art but lends
A lantern to her for our sure arrest !—
Still, Isabel, the game is not yet thine :
Play on,—I swear the stakes are life and death !—

* [*The gong strikes.*]

Another watch ! But that still hour shall be
The watching of my soul at its own shrine !

[FAITH, *who has been slowly advancing backwards, is now at the right side of ETHELDREDA, and on raising her eyes to the latter's face, falls back, shrieks, and cries : " That face ! "* ETHELDREDA *quickly veils*

herself and rushes up to the altar and kneels at her watch. FAITH hastily follows and throws herself down before and to the right of ETHELDREDA.]

FAITH.—Thou Sister—woman—lift thy veil !

[ETHELDREDA *points her off.*

I go not yet.

Nay—nay ;
[*Rising erect.*

By this all-sacred shrine,
I swear to look into that face !

[ETHELDREDA *crosses herself.*

Unveil !

[ETHELDREDA *drops her head.*

Then, thus I keep mine oath !

[*Tearing the veil from ETHELDREDA'S face—the latter starting up erect, turning around, and gazing defiantly at FAITH.*]

Phyllis !

My God !

[*She swoons, with a piercing shriek, and falls across the altar's steps.*]

ETHEL.—Thy mystery is solved ! Ha-ha !

We meet

E'en thus, yet how are we to part ?

But, hush !

The watch-bell must be muffled, that its sound
Bring no one here till she revives.

I go. [Exit.

FAITH (*recovering, and soliloquising while sitting in centre of bottom step*).—Ah, I but dreamt while at my weary watch,—

A vivid dream which seemed material !

[*After a slight pause, continues.*

All calm—all silent—like the halo of

The tomb——

[*Starting up.*

The “ tomb ” ! No—no ! Yes ! What ?

My brain——

My brain !

Oh ! Can the grave as silent be
As this all-holy vault ?—and can it breathe
Such awe profound, and deep religious fear ?

I'd fain in spirit tread the depthless path
 And mix with kin intelligences there
 As pilgrim to the Mecca of the soul.
 While wandering o'er the ebon desert, I
 Should prove the mirage of my human eye ;
 And standing on the ultra Rubicon,
 Take one long look on immortality—
 Mine eye, of lens divine, expanding with
 Th'interminable ether : then, perchance,
 I should behold my Morning Star arise
 On the horizon's purple e'er to be
 My new and everlasting World of Light !

[*After a sigh and another slight pause, and gazing on the
 sanctuary lamp.*]

'Tis said there burnt in Tullia's monument
 A lamp for many centuries until
 The desecrating mortal hand burst ope
 The marbled urn, when the congenial light—
 In sister'd fondness—quenched itself and shot
 Its fire away to follow Tullia's soul.

[*ETHELDREDA re-enters.*]

Should this be my last tomb—

ETHEL. (*interrupting, aside*).—It shall !

FAITH (*continuing*). (E'en now

My veil and vow confirm the solemn truth,
 And I in life erect death's monument)

My soul shall burn a lamp of clearer light

Than thine, thou holy-swinging minister !

ETHEL. (*aside*).—Till I shall quench it !

FAITH (*continuing*).

Harold !

That dear name—

Like to the fadeless green the laurel wears

Whilst kindred leaves grow pale from autumn's
 breath—

Shall live within my vase of memory,

Nor, as we change the transient flowers of earth,

Shall thy rich blossom, laved with love, decline

And wither there, come autumn, blight, or shade !

[*Suddenly observing and picking up the veil which she tore
 from ETHELDREDA'S face.*]

Great heavens ! It is her veil, and she is here !
 Here—Phyllis here ? No—no—and yet that face—
 God ! No ; it is impossible !

My dream

Was real, as I feared it was !

Where hath

She gone ? When shall we meet again, and where ?
 How shall our eyes meet ? How shall palpitate
 Our hearts, an ocean making of the breast ?
 “ Heart ” ?—nay, for *she* hath none. Her bosom
 heaves

But as the earthquake’s spasm—yawning to
 Unfold destruction : or like to a wave
 All-fatal rolling o’er the placid sea.

My shallop of affection rode too long
 The Phlegethon of her unfilial breast :

Tost—dashed upon the rocks—I lie at last

Abandoned, and amidst my wreck left to——

ETHEL. (*advancing, and confronting FAITH*).—Decay !

FAITH (*with a shriek, and covering her face with hands,*
then looking steadfastly into ETHELDREDA’S eyes).—

’Tis thou ! The raven’s croak was true !

Oh, creature yet of clay, throw quickly off

That sacred garb—it unbecomes thy soul !

The convent habitant should wear the cross

For scapular, and not a skull ! She should

The cloister make a local heaven, not

Golgotha ! (*In a whisper*) Ay, the pious tenant here

Should be a nun, and not a——

ETHEL.

Murderess !

Pause not in mimic modesty to say

That word, for thou hadst got it on thy tongue.

What *thou* call’st murder——

FAITH.

What the *world* so calls !

ETHEL.—The “ world ” ?

Dost thou make that thine oracle ?

That thing of fleeting fancies and caprice ?

It blows wild bubbles—like its children—and

Beholds them float away far out of sight,

Or burst in nothingness ere they expand.

The angels—longing to waft up thy word
 On their celestial embassy—are there
 Above the Shrine and wait to hear thee speak !

[ETHELDREDA *shudders, buries her face in hands, and forces herself away from FAITH : the latter slowly rises and continues her speech.*]

It is the truth, then,—true that on this spot
 Thou standest Harold's—

ETHEL. Hold ! Already that
 Black word hath tainted this pure air of light !

FAITH.—Swear, then, before this altar of thy God
 And mine,—while standing on these chaste-cold stones
 Which virgin knees in prayer and watching long
 Have sanctified,—while gazing reverent on
 Yon crucifix hung as a pendulum
 Betwixt thy soul and Heaven—upon the book
 Of conscience, passport indestructible
 Of thee to immortality anon :

Swear by these pious principles (or *one*),
 Thou *Sister Etheldreda* ; I have now

In God's Name, Harold's, mine, proposed the oath !

ETHEL.—Thou'rt not my shriver : what if I refuse ?

FAITH.—The *world* (young, beautiful, as thou) “refused”
 To purify itself, and hence was lost.

ETHEL.—By death of ONE that world was after saved.
 Mark thou, by *death*.

I had a world, for love
 Created it for me in Harold : by

His death that sphere to me hath been preserved !

FAITH.—Ah ! Then, thy sentiment starts to the bar
 And thunders “ guilty ” !

ETHEL. Clay must not be judge
 Of clay !

FAITH. Thou poor lost soul, 'tis not before
 Man's vain tribunal where the heart is tried,
 But its arraignment hath a stricter Bar !

ETHEL.—Why didst thou come between us ? Was it
 not

Enough that all was joy and peace ?

We loved

Each other, and we seemed as destined to
 Ride on the sea of life together—each
 Was pilot to the other's happiness ;
 But thou, like some divorcing wave of fate,
 Roll'dst in betwixt us ; and, with shivered chart,
 We lost our course and could not anchor then !

FAITH.—Oh, woman—cousin once—ask, ask thy heart
 (Or its fragmentary survivor) if

I was not innocent of artifice,
 Intent, or wish, that Harold should transfer
 That love to me which was another's right.
 Well thou dost know how like the infant bud
 That opes its petals in the springtime's bower,
 And wooed and kissed first by the loving sun
 Before th'expanded blossom blooming near,
 I, in mine artless girlhood, felt the cheer
 Of Harold's voluntary love ; nor could
 I shake the dewdrop off which gave my life
 A scented bloom—it was from heaven not earth !

ETHEL.—Hadst thou encouraged not his love, such love
 Would, with himself, be with me now to-day.

FAITH.—Come, we will place our hearts both side by side
 Upon this altar, and God shall decide
 Which gift to take—my Abel's or thy Cain's !

ETHEL.—Cain slew his kin from jealousy—

FAITH. And thou ?

[*A slight pause, then organ heard softly in distance :*

FAITH clasps hands on breast, whilst glancing up.]

Hark !

[*The organ gradually swells. ETHELDREDA rushes off.
 The choir is now heard, mingling with the organ, sing-
 ing at the service of Nocturns. FAITH prostrates
 herself before the altar, and the interior closes, showing
 the first set. Music and singing diminish and cease.*]

Enter ETHELDREDA.

ETHEL. (*soliloquising*).—Curse it ! 'Tis too late ! I
 now have played
 And lost—the game is hers !

“ Too late ? ” Nay, nay.

When Phaethon Apollo's fiery car

Drove and lit earth's and heaven's funeral blaze,
 'Twas proved by Phœbus not too late to save.
 So, Phyllis, it is ne'er too late for thee—
 Ne'er late to free thy wretched self again,
 And save thy name, thy convent vows, thy life !
 No—no !

My brain ! Why doth it prompt me thus ?
 I *think* too much,—thoughts breed such fantasies.
 In sleep, awake, these brainish phantoms rise !
 'Tis strange that when the conscience feels a sin,
 A mirror charged with rhetoric doth start
 To mercilessly argue with the soul !
 Psha ! Phyllis, be no child. Act—*act* at once,
 So shall thy mental mirages dissolve
 Upon the false horizon's air.

One step
 To farther take, and then my desert's crossed.
 How take that step ? How brush the cloud away
 To view my heaven of light again ? These walls
 Hold souls—those vigilant and strict.

I'll think—

I'll think.

Enter MARY.

MARY. So deep in meditation is
 A pious pattern, Sister, and such thoughts
 Are beads of pearl for thy pure soul to count.

ETHEL.—No dewdrops fall within the barren cave.

MARY.—Thouspeakest strangely,—'tis beyond my mind.

ETHEL.—Then, I am saved, and luckier than the Sphinx:

Fond Œdipus *her* riddle solved, and she
 Was lost.—

(*Aside*) My dark mind holds no crystal thoughts.

MARY.—I bring a message, Sister, unto thee
 From our Superior Mother. She requests
 That thou the coming Watch wilt take instead
 Of her—now indisposed—which Watch will be
 Next after service, and thy signal is
 Three strokes upon the gong.

I now must go :

Nocturns is over, and I have to take

The Sisters back into their cells.

Adieu.

[*Exit.*

ETHEL.—So I must watch. Rude barrier in my way !

I, then, must e'en compress my time.

Let's see.

Yes,—no : that would be ghastly. Then, why not—

Nay ; that would show in after-proof of me.

I'll think.

Her cell is in the eastern wing :

The corridor is long, and lightly floored

With wood ; my steps at midnight would be heard

Did I with phial venture there. I must

Be cautious.

[*Re-enter procession of nuns, who go off at their previous entrance : MARY and FAITH are the last file : the latter remains behind and observes ETHELDREDA, who continues her soliloquy, puts hand inside her gown, draws a small poniard, and contemplates it, ignorant of FAITH'S presence.*]

'Tis but small and weak.

Ah, thou

Old ornament, which once shon'st through my hair

Like lightning through an ebon night, I've kept

Thee hidden (but with difficulty) since

I left the world for this too living tomb,

Resolving—should, by angry fortune, I

Be hither traced a homicide—that thou

Shouldst be my pilot unto liberty

(For if in death we burst life's fetters, it

Is freedom, and the soul its irons lose).

Such was, vain toy, the work I doomed for thee.

But toy no longer—ornament no more—

Thy mission may be changed.

Yea, it will serve,

Frail though it is.

A hair-pin turned into

A dagger ? Life's gewgaw of vanity

Transformed to tool of executioner ?

Dress of the head, lent now to pall the heart ?

Degenerate exchange !

When Cato scanned
The deep religious eloquence upon
His sword's all-penal point to him, he saw
His immortality there glittering ;
Nor could he tenant that abode of bliss
Which Plato's kindled page revealed, without
The carnal life being parted by such blade
From the pure, panting soul cooped in the clay.
This—this bright harbinger is also thine
To usher summer evergreen to thee,
And herald thee to Heaven, Isabel !

[*Putting up poniard, and is going, when FAITH suddenly confronts her.*]

FAITH.—Bright, Sister, is thy crucifix !

ETHEL. (*startled*).

What's that ?

FAITH.—The convent cross but seldom wears such guilt !

ETHEL.—Thou'rt mad ! Gaze, woman, now around
and see

Some both of silver, gold——

FAITH.

But with no *point* !

ETHEL. (*after a slight pause*).—It—it is better thus to
handle at

My meditations.

FAITH (*ironically*).

When they are profound

And troubled : then thy blade—I mean thy “cross”—

Doth *brightly* symbolise thy Heavenly hope.

ETHEL. (*hotly*).—What colour wouldst thou have the
metal,—black ?

FAITH.—Oh, Sister *Etheldreda*, take great care

It be not *red* !

ETHEL.

In colour there is naught.

Hast thou not learned that even Christ Himself

Hath been divinely carved in ebony—

He and the Blessed Virgin limned in black ?

That “Christ,” or “Saviour,” verbally mean *black* ?

Our very Christian symbols first had birth

In dim antiquity, far ages ere

That Grandest, Arch-Initiate of all time

At Bethlehem translated once for all

The Magic-Mysteries of Egypt and
 Of Persia, India, Greece ; and shed the Light
 Whereby to read the Heathen's mystic lore—
 That lore which e'en from Eden shadowed forth
 The Christian truths, and formed true parallels
 'Twixt its inspired mythology and our
 Own Christianity: the Creed, indeed,
 Which owes a debt to pagan prophecies,
 And which prefigured was by e'en the Cross,
 Whose origin is lost in time's midnight,—
 Old world and new but Magic-twins of God !

FAITH.—Art thou a pious Sister, under vows
 To reverence thy Maker, and to yield
 Thy life, thy soul, to His own keeping, yet
 Wouldst pair the Pagan's with the Christian's rites ?
 ETHEL.—“ Light shone in darkness, but the darkness
 could
 Not comprehend it.”

Yea, they are true pairs.
 E'en Plato (called “ divine ”) promulged his Cross
 Of mystical philosophy : indeed,
 The Pagans but supplied true types of our
 Own Christian Logos, Trinity, and, too,
 The Incarnation, Crucifixion, and
 The Resurrection, and Eternal Life.
 Aurelius said the Logos of St. John
 Agreed with Plato's and Pythagoras'.
 The Platonists said Christ had borrowed from
 Th'Athenian,¹ so cognate their doctrines were.
 Yea, Plato had a triple eye divine.²
 “ Our Christianity's religion was
 Known really to the ancients, from the time
 The human race began, till Christ in flesh

¹ See “ *The Writings of Origen* ” (Dr. Crombie's trans., vol. ii. of “ *Ante-Nicene Library*,” vol. xxiii., 1872—Clarks) “ *Origen contra Celsum*,” c. xvi., p. 354.

² “ *The third eye which Plato saw that he himself possessed, he will refer to the category of prodigies.* ” *

* “ *“ Alicubi forsan occurrit : me vero uspiam legisse non memini. Credo Platonem per tertium oculum selam πολυμάθειαν et scientium, quâ ceteris anteibat, denotare voluisse.* ” —Ibid., c. ix., p. 345.

Arrived, whence our religion's name commenced,
 Though previously existing in itself"—
 So St. Augustine hath himself pronounced.
 "Our Lady Isis" was a "Virgin and
 Immaculate": in Buddhist temples sound
 The sacred bells; and beads and rosaries
 Were used long time ago: "nuns" lived and prayed
 In Egypt; e'en th'aureola of Saints
 Had birth from Babylonian artists' brush—
 The Hindu Virgin's head, her own Son's too,
 The Hindu Saviour's, wore aureolas
 (Devaki nursing Christna—mirrors of
 Our Mary and her Christ of Bethlehem).
 Thus wears the Christian Church, inside and out,
 The exoteric heathenism stamp.
 The law of Contrarieties secures
 In harmony Creation's wonders all.
 By "Daimôn" did the Greeks interpret e'en
 The Godhead, whilst in Holy Writ it means
 A Demon-Satan!

"Serpent," too, at once
 The *slayer* and *redeemer*—linking both
 Mosaic Egypt and red Calvary!
 Light hath its Shade—one proves the other *is*:
 And Evil yields the verity of Good.
 The Day and Night are mirrors of themselves—
 Commutual offspring: gaudy Day reveals
 The shade; Night shows heaven's brilliant majesty.
 E'en Life and Death themselves persist as *one*—
 We really never live, we never die!
 The holy hand in benediction raised,
 Secrets a curse within its mirror'd shade.
 Religion's fundamental maxim true
 Is *Demon est Deus inversus*.¹

But

¹ See illustration on front page of "Anselmo." Such is the position in which the hand is held, when giving benediction, by not only the Pope of Rome and certain other clerics, but also, indeed, is precisely similar to that in which the hand of Jesus Christ is often depicted while giving His blessing at the Last Supper.

Enough of this.

Why art thou here with me ?
What dost thou want ? Speak out, for I am at
Mine own devotion.

FAITH. But where is thy shrine ?
Nay, nay ; I'll be thy shrine—that is, my heart
Will be.

Yea, Phyllis, in my heart there burns
A sanctuary lamp of feeble glow
Whose hallowed flame of constant light is love,—
Love for the one who linked my soul to his,—
Love still for her who broke that link apart.
The royal Macedonian's hand of steel
Was softer yet than thine : *his* broke a knot
A peasant tied, but *thine*, one God had knit !
His warlike hand loosed but a kingdom's fate ;
Thy tender woman's threw away a soul !
Oh, Phyllis, yea, I'll be thy shrine of peace,—
My heart shall shrive thee yet if thou wilt but
Repent for stealing from it Harold's love !
Here Sisters in this convent isle, we'll too
Be sisters in great nature's noblest state !

[*Crossing herself.*]

Oh, Phyllis, let us three in Heaven meet !

ETHEL.—We must abide our doom !

FAITH. “Doom,”—what is doom ?

ETHEL.—What mortals cannot comprehend.

FAITH. Then, why

Dost thou invent the word ?

ETHEL. It is the voice

Of circling Nature whispering decay,

And animative dust interprets it.

FAITH.—Ah, Phyllis, too much dust art thou !

I spoke

Not of such dust's exotics, but of its

Superlative, intrinsic self—the soul !

ETHEL.—I'll speak of neither,—'tis immortals' theme !

FAITH.—Come, gaze with me within yon skylight
high.

While pacing these dull cloisters do we not

Oft look into it watching how the day
 And night advance—as though that window were
 The dial for our souls to count the hours
 Of gladness ? And as light doth crystallise
 The agate pane, we seem to e'en expand
 In kindred nature with the wooing dawn.
 Dost thou call *that*, then, but immortals' theme ?
 Nay, Phyllis, 'tis the mirror to us dust !

ETHEL.—Thy creed is morbid——

FAITH. Then, what's thine ?

ETHEL. To live !

FAITH.—“ To live ” ?

Ah, so thou wilt,—and live till Time
 Himself doth pause upon his ether'd road
 To slake his thirst and fill another glass,
 Ere through the multiplying æons he
 Limp on his way to reach Eternity !
 Yea—yea, thy soul will live indeed !

[*As from a sudden thought, she quickly, and in a whisper,*
adds :]

But where ?

ETHEL.—'Tis taught to no one.

But enough of this.

What is thy business here with me ?

FAITH. To talk

Of *him*, and, by our conversation, raise
 His spirit from the tomb with us again !

ETHEL.—Forget him,—thou'lt be happier then.

FAITH. “ Forget ” ?

And can the rose forget its scent ?—the sky
 Its sun ?—the parchèd bud its dewdrop kind ?—
 The mourning midnight its bright heavenly star ?—
 Frail man his rainbow through the storm of life
 On earth ?—nay, can thyself forget thyself ?
 Didst thou but love him true, his memory
 Would dwell within thy mind, like day-dawn's
 glow

The world can ne'er forget.

Ah, Phyllis, thou

Couldst not have loved him !

ETHEL.

Thou art wrong. 'Twas

from

Such love I could not suffer him to look
 Too fondly on thyself. How could I bear
 To see the smile which should belong to me
 Light on another?—how, with coolness, view
 The transference, e'en to thyself, of his
 Fond heart?—my refuge and mine earthly hope?
 He was the loving beam to which I clung
 Until it drifted from my passioned clutch
 And left me battling with the choking waves:
 E'en far and farther did it drift away,
 And soon I watched it out of sight. 'Twas then,
 Abandoned to my hopeless fate, I turned
 In desperation to the wildest wave!

FAITH.—But thou hast sunk beneath it and art
 washed,

Like nobler wrecks, upon the barren shore
 To waste and pass away without a stone
 Or epitaph to tell the wondering world
 The virtues of the soul bequeathing it!

ETHEL.—A stone? Its voice of coldness soon is
 hushed,

No echo leaving on the changing air.
 When Cheops reared his all-ascending pile
 He deemed the stones imperishable, but
 His and the other pyramids, the tower
 Of Pharos, and the gorgeous tombs and domes
 Of all the Ptolemies pass each away;
 Caria's royal Mausoleum, too.

And what old lusty Time fails to efface
 From epitaphic marble, earthquakes can
 Engulf and rend the tablet and the tomb.
 E'en Solomon, the sage's sage, hath said:
 "Our name shall be forgot in time, and man
 Shall unremember all our works,—our lives
 Shall pass away as traces of a cloud."

The Roman purpled thinker, too, doth state:
 "Fame's tale is quickly told, then melts in nought."
 The Latin orator adviseth that

Fame lives but shortly, not eternally.

Then, speak no more of memorising life.

FAITH.—Thou talk'st of earthquakes. List, oh Phyllis,
and

I'll tell to thee a recent dream of mine.

'Twas midnight. I was all alone. I gazed

Above, around, but all was darkness—not

One star in heaven, or glow-worm on the earth :

Methought the world was chaos once again,

So dense the black, the silence so profound.

I knew not where I stood,—I floated like

Some lost, forgotten spirit in the air.

I tried to sing and break my loneliness ;

But not the slightest accent could I make—

The ether stifled, like some inky clout,

The voiceful breath upon my quivering lip :

And then I tried to sleep, but found no base

Material as a pillow for my head.

Then scarcely as I had conceived the sight,

I heard a rustling, and a figure fled

In muffling white before me : as I watched

It far across the night's horizon fade,

It suddenly unveiled and looked on me :

'Twas Harold's face ! His moistened eye was sad—

His cheek was pale—his lips white as the ash.

Then, as he veiled his countenance again,

He smiled ; tints to his cheeks and lips approached :

But it was momentary,—with that glance

He turned and mingled with the ebony.

I tried to follow, but my struggles all

Were vain to quit mine airy fundament.

I would have cried, but could not weep one tear—

My heart so selfish of its sorrow was !

Resigning once again myself unto

My loneliness, I soon was startled next

With such-like rustling, and another form

Shot eagerly before my sleepless eye.

This figure wore a covering mantle of

Deep crimson : on it fled within the path

The former took : it halted, too, like he

Upon the same far spot : then slowly it
 Unmuffled. Phyllis, thou canst guess that face !
 This was not all. While I stood wondering still,
 I heard a universal moan, as though
 'Twere distant thunder, which in volume grew
 Until I felt quite stunned, yet could not fall :
 Then, with one terrifying spasm, the
 Deep vault below yawned and disclosed a rock
 Of mountain splitting, whilst a lurid light
 Lit up its cloven chasm ! As I gazed
 Methought my feet approached the tottering hill—
 I seemed a ruin e'en in ruins ! Tossed
 From fragment unto fragment, I beheld
 The granite blocks around me headlong fall !
 Dashed down and down into the deep abyss,
 The rocks—like particles of solid death—
 Encircled me and echoed awful fate :
 To kill would have been kind and merciful !
 Then, just as one huge falling mass appeared
 To make mine instant grave, I with a shriek
 Awoke, and felt it bliss to ope mine eyes !

ETHEL.—Well, and what of this dream ?

FAITH. I, Phyllis, thought,
 And think, it but symbolic of some ill—
 Perchance of some destruction here,—(*whispering*)
 it may
 Be death !

ETHEL. Must not that come to all ?

FAITH (*significantly*). It must—
 By nature !

ETHEL. How else could it come ?

FAITH. Dost *thou*
 Not know ? Ask thy right hand !

ETHEL. Insinuate
 No more ! I've borne thy scoffs, thy sneers, thy hints,
 Beyond endurance, and remember though
 A nun, I yet have woman's nature left !

FAITH.—A "woman's" ? Nay, hadst thou but
 that—

ETHEL. (*going close up to FAITH'S side*). List to

Me, Isabel. Thou canst not *prove* the deed
I'm charged with.

FAITH. Ay, in very truth I can !
And more : I've kept a proof material !

ETHEL. (*growing alarmed*). In
What shape ?

FAITH. When thou the beverage didst give
To Harold, and in haste then wiped the cup
With thine own handkerchief thou drop'st the
silk ;

I found it : the apothecary traced
The stains of *poison* on it ! Something else
That kerchief published——

ETHEL. (*eagerly*). What was that ?

FAITH. *Thy name !*

ETHEL. (*slightly staggering, and speaking aside*).—
Great heavens, I am undone !— [To FAITH.

Wilt thou give up

To me—or yet destroy—that handkerchief ?

'Tis useless now to thee : thou'rt buried here

For life : thou'st bidden to the world farewell !

FAITH.—I may be “buried,” but I am not dead !

ETHEL. (*significantly*).—We're told death hovers near
us but unseen.

'Tis at our elbow, so Aurelius saith.

Yea, life itself is death, and death but life,—

Those synonyms, those twins, in human fate !

FAITH.—When Hercules wrapt fondly o'er his form

The sulphurous tunic, he but little dreamt

That folding it in love, he folded death.

Hermione's all-dazzling necklet, too,

Embraced in death the wearer's loving throat.

(*Impressively*) 'Tis true, then, that we oft clasp death
with love !

ETHEL.—As loving cousin do not menace me !

FAITH.—Like Jephthah, I can not recall my word !

ETHEL.—Dost thou refuse to give the handkerchief ?

FAITH.—I do !

ETHEL. Refuse to keep thy knowledge of
The past a secret deep ?

FAITH.

My will remains

Mine own.

ETHEL. (*slowly, but secretly, re-drawing poniard, looking around and going up close to FAITH*).—

Suppose—suppose thyself now at

Two stern cross-roads, one leading to a gulf

Where thou wouldst dash to pieces thy dear self ;

The other straight into a vale of flowers

And sunshine : which then wouldst thou choose to take ?

The fairer one, of course ?

I offer thee—

FAITH (*startled*).—Thou “ offer ” ?

Heavens ! What

canst thou mean ?

ETHEL.

I mean

That I can offer thee the sunshine as

The barter of that handkerchief !

FAITH.

Couldst thou

E'en offer me now life or death—

ETHEL. (*speaking close in her ear, and in quick, but breathless, voice*). I take

Thee at thy word ! 'Tis what I meant !

Exchange

The handkerchief with me for life !—

[Gong heard—one stroke.

My Watch !—

Speak ! 'Tis the last appeal ! Say, life or death ?

FAITH (*resignfully, with arms folded across breast, and looking upwards*).—Death !ETHEL. (*stabbing her*). Take it, then—it is thy prayer !

[FAITH falls senseless : second stroke on gong : ETHEL-DREDA rushes from her, covering face with hands.]

My God !

What have I done ?

[Third stroke on gong.

My Watch-bell's final call !

I cannot watch ! I dare not kneel and face

That altar now ! No—no ! I—stay ! I know !

The self-same steel shall,—yes, I'll do it ; yes !

[Stabs herself and falls dead.]

Re-enter MARY: as she is coming down stage, she staggers when observing the prostrate bodies, then eagerly kneels and examines them.

MARY (*rising*).—Dead !—

[*Rushes to entrance, and calls off.*

Sister, hie for the physician ! Quick !

He's in the convent now, attending on

Our dear Superior Mother, ill herself.—

[*Returning and wringing hands.*

Oh, miserere—miserere !

What

A sight of horror !

[*Crossing herself.*

Jesu Hominum

Salvator !

Enter FALKARD hastily, who proceeds to bodies and examines them.

FALKARD (*after examining body of ETHELDREDA*).—

Heaven rest her soul, for it

Is flown !

[*After he has examined and dressed FAITH's wounds, and placed a phial to her lips, she shows signs of recovery.*]

MARY. Praise to our Holy Mother, she

Recovers !

FALKARD (*slightly raising FAITH and supporting her*).—

Death is cheated ! Yea, she lives !

The wound is only superficial.

Go,

Prepare her chamber, and I'll summon aid

To bring her hence when she hath rested more.

Meantime, I do enjoin thee not to speak

Of this, else others' presence here would but

Disturb her and be fatal to her health.

[*MARY exits.*

FAITH (*slowly recovering, and speaking in a frenzy, not observing FALKARD*).—Hath—hath it been but one more horrid dream ?

Am I awake ? Oh, Phyllis, stay thy hand !

No—no ! Don't strike ! It would be murder ! Ha !

I see a glitter in thy hand ! It falls !

[Utters a piercing shriek and faints : she presently recovers, after attention by FALKARD, and continues her soliloquy.]

Oh, why did God my loved one take ?

FALKARD (*aside, and with some surprise*).—That name

Of “ Phyllis ” ! How familiar, and how strange !

FAITH (*continuing*).—I loved him, Phyllis, and with all the ten

Sad years now flown since he was lost to earth,

I love him still, and more than e’er thou couldst !

FAL. (*with increased surprise*).—Ten years !

FAITH (*suddenly realising FALKARD’S presence*).—A man ! Who—who art thou ?—and how didst thou Come hither ?

Oh, I’ve had a fearful dream !

So real !

FAL. I am a physician, and Was summoned to attend thee.

I am glad

Thou’rt better, and would counsel thee to now

Repair for rest to thine apartment.

[Raising her to a standing posture.

See,

Thou’rt getting now quite strong again. But still

Mine arm must lend a little aid and be

A prop until I hand thee to the care

Of Sister Mary. Come.—

(*Aside*) How like—how like !

It gives my mind a dream !—

FAITH. First, let me thank Thee for thy kindness, skill and care.

FAL.—Nay, Sister,—I am paid already by

Result, and also by the recompense

I see is eloquently glistening from

Thy newly-kindled eye.

FAITH. How kind thou art !

[With forced brightness.

But, still, I’d rather pay my debt of thanks

More definitely by my truer tongue.

FAL.—The eye is oft the final arbiter

Though tongues may silent be, or though the lips
 May plead, command, or smile, or frown.
 Within the eye the volume of man's mind
 Is traced in characters all unequivocal.
 Yea, 'tis the window which the captive soul
 Peers through in Truth's fair light and nudity.
 E'en life and death oft-times dart from the eye,—
 'Tis Cæsar's Cæsar mutely to command !

FAITH.—Then, let mine eye translate my thanks to thee.

FAL.—Nay, come,—rest is imperative for thee.
[Is leading her off when they suddenly encounter the body of ETHELDREDA : FAITH utters a piercing shriek and falls back into FALKARD'S arms.]

FAITH *(upon recovering, after a few moments)*.—

My God ! It was no dream ! Oh, Phyllis, I——
[Becomes momentarily dazed and staggers : voices heard off chanting the Miserere, accompanied by the organ.]

FAL.—Come,—this poor body needs removal. Hark !

FAITH.—The *Miserere* !

[Crossing herself, glancing upwards, then folding arms on breast.]

FAL. *(gently endeavouring to lead her off)*.—

Prithee, Sister, come.

FAITH *(repeating, somewhat listlessly but meditatively)*.—
 “Come.”

Whither ?

Few must be the pathways now
 Which life hath set for me to tread alone !

[Slightly breaking away from him.]
 FAL. *(aside)*.—“Alone” !

So fair—so sweet—so innocent !
 She seems as though with her white, virgin hand
 She held Heaven's Door ajar to let a beam
 Escape to Earth while she stood sentinel !

FAITH *(still contemplatively)*.—
 Alone !

And here—my goal, my Rubicon,
 My brink of life !

On earth, yet all alone !

FAL. (*still aside*).—" Alone."

Can Heaven create such

beauteous form

To walk the verdant earth alone ?—reflect

Thus singly sunbeams of life's little day ?—

To share with only stars the power divine

Of alchemising man's dull night to morn ?

Yea, can it be that such a proxy of

An angel the aureola should wear,

Yet have no mate to bless him with her ray ?

Ah, 'tis e'en so : as when we place within

A vase of ruder quality and form

Th'all-lovely lily to but dissipate

Its virtue, beauty, fragrance, yea, its life !

FAITH (*crossing herself*).—Come,—I am ready : let us
go—I to

The shadow of the cross, and thou to that

Decoying, flickering light the world provides !

[*They are going, when suddenly FAITH starts, looks intently and excitedly into FALKARD'S face, then perplexedly and breathlessly continues her speech.*]

That scar ! I know the mark ! Ten years ago

A bride beheld her bridegroom wear the same !

FAL. (*with increasing amazement, and touching his ear with finger*).—This scar ! " Ten years ago " !
" A bride "——

[*Eagerly scrutinising FAITH'S face, then falling back in consternation.*]

My God !

'Tis Isabel !

FAITH (*also consternated*).—And thou ?

FAL. (*eagerly clasping her*).

Thy Harold !

FAITH (*as though struggling with mingled feelings of doubt and assurance, and disengaging herself*).—

What

Great mystery is this ?

My Harold here !

Alive ! Back from the dead !

FAL.

From death to life !

Thy face hath changed with care and woe ; thine eye
Wears, too, such foreign sadness, and thy voice

Hath changed its silver to discordant woe
 (As well as deeming thee long lost to earth)
 That I e'en failed to recognise old love !

FAITH (*with suppressed emotion*).—All this must be a dream ! My Harold died !

FAL.—Since I was nursed to health ten years ago
 My life hath been but as a partial death
 Without thee at my side, but worse than all
 Without a knowledge e'en of thy dear fate.
 And now to find thee here ! A sacred nun !
 When even to approach thee is to violate !
 Here, where we are as much divided as
 Before—nay, more so, for thy hallowed vows
 Pronounce divorcement, save between our hearts !

FAITH (*with growing confidence and eagerness*).—
 Thy bearded face deceives mine eye, but still
 Thy voice, in truth, less strangely meets mine ear,
 And accents, long since silent, now expand
 Responsive to my heart ! Yea, in thine eye
 I read the truth—the truth that love is here !
 [*Embracing him : he presses her forehead with his lips :
 then, as though upon a sudden realisation, she re-
 luctantly breaks away from him in distress.*]

Jesu Maria ! [*Crossing herself.*]

My holy vows !

I'm cursed !

FAL. (*gently approaching her and taking her hand, whilst
 he points to the body of ETHELDREDA, and speaks
 with emphatic tenderness*).—

Look !

FAITH (*after slightly pausing in apprehensive awe, before
 taking the look, then speaking in a whisper*).—

Great Heaven, what a triple tryst we've kept !

Dost know the body, Harold, silent there !

FAL.—Nay, Isabel, I did not recognise
 The face, in haste to give assistance when
 I came, and in th'imperfect light :
 But whosoe'er she is, we must arrange
 Removal.

Come.

[*Is going.*]

FAITH (*checking him*).—H'sh !

Harold, canst thou guess
Who lies there (oh, so cold and still !) ?

But, nay—
Thou'lt never guess !

Go—go and see, and then
Confess that Heaven's ways to mortals are
A wide, wide sea whose darkling waves
Are shoreless, unconfined, untimed, untired :
Whose margin fades before the carnal eye,
While we, Earth's children, o'er the scene
Distend the eye and are confounded by
Our own philosophies and sciences !
Fools at our birth, we're greater fools at death !
[*She motions him towards the body : he goes, and after
scrutinising the face, starts up with consternation
and emotion.*]

FAL.—My God, 'tis Phyllis !

[*FAITH goes to him, and, bursting into tears, falls on his
neck.*]

Isabel, oh say
Is all this but a dream, or doth Fate play
In grim reality with all of us ?
FAITH.—Alas, alas, 'tis but too sadly true !
FAL.—What means it all ? I'm lost in wonderment !
I urge thee, Isabel, relate to me
The mystery so great, so awful, and
So fatal ! Speak !

FAITH (*after overcoming involuntary silence*).—
“ One shall be taken and
The other left ! ”

Oh, Harold, 'tis a tale
Which to relate in detail *now* would split
My heart and leave the bleeding wound unhealed !
In brief : on first report of what had chanced
To thee, a horror seized me (making me
More mad than cool and wise) I hastily
Fled from the agonising scene and came
Here to this home of peace, and rest, and calm,
Which make the soul take one step nearer Heaven !

FAL.—Unhappy haste of thine which parted us !

But Phyllis,—

FAITH. Ah, thou canst not understand,
Nor could my words translate, the wonderment
When she and I discovered either here !
It was a further strange caprice of Fate !

FAL.—But tell me, Isabel, what mean the wounds
Which thou and she received (the latter, oh,
So fatal) ?

FAITH. 'Twas her own mad act (which God
forgive !)

When in a fit of passion while we talked
Of thee and of the fateful past to us !

FAL.—I join my prayer with thine—God rest her
soul !

[*Gong heard, at which FAITH starts.*

What may that mean ?

FAITH. It is the call to “Lauds,”
Our Service held at day-break.

FAL. “Day-break.”

Say,

[*Taking her hand.*

Dear Isabel, oh, will there—*can* there—come

To us and in our lives a “day-break” once

Again ? [*Gently and reluctantly releasing her hand.*

I know I should not dare to now

Touch on a theme so secular as love !

And yet not secular in architype,

For “he that loveth not doth not know God ;

For God is love,”—thus states the Holy Writ.

E'en secular philosophy doth teach

(Through Seneca) that “love can ne'er accord

With fear.”

[*Taking her hand again.*

And, Isabel, our mutual love

Had birth long, long ago—

FAITH (*disengaging her hand, and motioning him to
silence*).—

Ah, yes, how sweet

To mount in spirit o'er the waves which have

So roughly surged and washed us on the rocks,

And, by re-crossing them, to dwell again
 Where sunshine, peace, and love a heaven reflect !
 FAL.—Alas, alas, dear Isabel, that now
 Such earthly heaven for us hath passed away !

[*Gong again heard.*

FAITH (*distressedly*).—May the Madonna intercede for me !

That was the final summons ! I'm too late !
 [*Singing and organ heard, which gradually diminish as FAITH'S and FALKARD'S dialogue proceeds.*]

It means a penance both severe and long !
 FAL.—But thou art not yet strong enough to take
 Thy usual part in the conventual rites.
 From my profession I will certify
 So much for thee. Thou art my patient.

(*Significantly*) Ah,

I would that thou wert *more*, dear Isabel !
 FAITH (*warmly*).—As “ Isabel ” I can and do respond,—
 (*Painfully*) As “ Faith ” I dare not even talk to thee !
 FAL. (*taking her hand*).—Oh, then, be “ Isabel ” !

Let love baptise
 Thee o'er again ! Let life be life indeed,
 And not a twilight streaking both our hearts !
 More heavens than one exist to all mankind !
 FAITH.—My soul fears perjury, for then
 What good is death though life be earthly heaven ?
 Death is the gate of life, and conscience stands
 Strict sentinel to point our destined way !
 Could I expunge all my conventual vows—
 Forget my pious office here—remove
 The barrier 'twixt my cell and outside world,—
 Ah, could I but do these, and do them all
 With clear impunity to heart and soul,
 So easy and so eager were the step
 To take which thou dost in affection urge !

FAL.—I would not (God forbid !) propose—much less
 Abet—a breach of ethic duty in
 Thyself ; but, Isabel, if there doth lurk
 A secret, dormant and insidious wish
 Within thy soul to consummate those joys

Barred by thy vows, thou art a rebel still,
 Albeit helplessly, reluctantly
 And pitiably ! Thou tookest thy strict vows
 In ignorance of real facts around,
 And on a cause which was no cause at all !
 In reverent judgment, then, and simple faith,
 I humbly think thy vows discharge themselves,
 And thou dost stand all-innocently free—
 Absolved by conscience and, we pray, by Heaven !

FAITH (*after struggling with her emotions for a few moments*).—

I feel what thou dost think !

Dear Harold, I

Am thine again !

[*Reposing herself in his arms.*

FAL. Mine own dear Isabel !

Re-enter MARY.

MARY (*aghast*).—*Maria !* Can it be ?

[*FALKARD and FAITH disengage themselves.*

This impious act

[*To FAITH.*

And perjured, base revolt from holy vows,
 And dissipation of thy sanctity,
 Are attributes removed afar from all
 Pertaining to thy sacred Sisterhood !—

[*To FALKARD.*

And as to thee, sir, I would only say
 Thou'st disappointed and deceived us all,—
 Nay, hast abused our trust and confidence
 In thy professional capacity !
 In duty bound, I hasten to report
 This heinous act, to our Superior !

[*Is going.*

FAITH.—Thou gentle Sister, stay and hear me speak
 For both.

Thou'lt recollect my narrative
 To thee—the cause which led me to devote
 My future life here 'neath this sacred roof :
 That cause, th'imagined loss of him I loved.
 Miraculously God hath now restored
 Him whom before God had betrothed to me !

Then, since it hath pleased Heaven thus again
 To join us, we have hope and faith that in
 The merits of His own wise act we can
 By prayer obtain His absolution of
 My reverent renunciation of
 The vows which but in ignorance I took !

MARY.—I scarce know how to answer thee ; but still
 In any case it is not for myself
 To answer or make comment : thou wilt have
 To come to our Superior Mother now
 And learn her judgment.

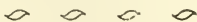
I will hasten to
 Prepare her for thy coming.

[Crosses herself, then exits.]

FAL. (*encouragingly taking her hand, and opening a window-shutter, through which a faint beam of light enters*).—

Isabel,
 The “ day-break ” !

Come—we’ll go into the light !
[Curtain.]



LINES

Written beneath the picture of an angel.

EMPYREAL being, with thy hallowed glance
And form created from ethereal space
By Heaven's Praxiteles in marble far
More dazzling white than that of Parian stone :
Borne on the softest sails of feather'd down
Through regions where celestial zephyrs float :
With movements which Heaven's graces e'er control :
With steps which fall as lightly as God's breath
When on thine embassy in azure realms :
And more than all, with that grand majesty
Which throws a glorious ray around thy form :
With eyes of dazzling lustre rainbows lit :
Thy charms are Nature's purest elements
And essences of all celestial light,—
Thou who upon thy radiant brow sublime
Eternal wear'st the roseate hues of youth
With bloom carnationed in the richest tint.
Thy marbled-surface form is sculptured fine
And glass'd with brilliance Omnipotent.
Thy mantle soft was woven in virgin snow
(Embroidered by some Heavenly Acesas,
And circling more voluptuously thy form
Than the transparent robe the Cosic maid)—
It is an India's India in itself,
And glorious whiter than the Grææ wore.
Thy foot that measures treadless spheres above
Doth glide as smoothly as a beam of light.
Thy smiling mouth is like a crimson cloud
Dividing in the sunset sky at eve,
Whose twin and placid streak doth graceful show
The pearly brightness of a newer sky.

Thine aspect wears serenity profound,
 And holiness doth all thy movements hush.
 Thine anthem'd accents echo Heavenly choirs,
 And all thy words are whispers straight from God.
 Thy beauty kindles in poor mortals here
 A newer fire and charms their souls away :
 Enchanted by thy presence, we must gaze
 And gaze, then helpless fall asleep in dreams.
 Thy hair which wears the gloss of splendour rare
 And is of satin spun from loom divine,
 Encurls most jealously thy snowy neck
 As if to hide thy charms from envy's eye.
 Our words from out the mortal lexicon
 Fail to describe thee and thine attributes,
 And all the language our dull souls command
 Exhausts itself by calling such as thou :
 " Most beautiful, soft spirit glory-lit."
 Thou paragon creation over man,
 Oh, blame us not if from our lowly clay
 We, by the mocking limning of thyself
 Our limitable brain in fancy draws,
 With thine absorbing attributes divine,
 Dare to uplift to thee our mental eyes
 And long for bliss to dwell eterne with thee !

THE PRAYER OF MANKIND.

OH, Thou, Who dost the lily paint
 And clothe (which, naked, turns to Thee)
 And vigils keep o'er sparrows faint,
 And hear the chiefest sinner's plea,—
 Who dost with alchemy divine
 Transmute our scarlet into wool,—
 Whose Science makes the rainbow shine,
 Beyond the skill of mortal tool
 To copy or to violate,—
 Thou Who the universe didst build
 But yet descend'st to shape the fate
 E'en of the puny, new-born child,—

Who giv'st our Earth a sapphire roof,
 And deck'st our path with emerald cloth,—
 Who giv'st Thy servants no reproof,
 But sinners whelm within Thy wrath,—
 Thou Pilot o'er life's darkling seas,
 Steer Thou my sailless, frailsome raft ;
 The raging waves do Thou appease,
 And let Thy zephyrs it e'er waft !
 Great Sceptred Judge of all mankind,
 When I fall prostrate at Thy Bar,—
 Do Thou a tender verdict find—
 Acquit my soul from doom afar !
 Do not forsake me when I fail
 T'obey Thy stern commandments high,—
 My life is Thine, my soul doth hail
 Its promised passport to the Sky !
 Oh, Thou who dost the curtain close
 Around the drowsy world at eve,
 When I in death must soon repose,
 Within Thy Fold do Thou receive !
 Prepare my shroud with fabric spun
 From Heaven's Loom by angel's hand,
 That when I sleep (my labours done)
 I shall awake in Blissful Land !
 When fade around me flowers of joy
 And strew my path with barren leaves,
 The fountains of Thy Dew employ
 Till Death fresh blossoms o'er me weaves !
 Tend Thou my blushing plant of youth ;
 Thy grace all through my manhood shine ;
 Replenish age with vital Truth,
 Then take the staff it must resign !
 Reserve for me a corner small
 Within Thy Mansion adamant,
 Lest from Its parapet I fall
 In dazzling wonder, deafening chant !
 Till I behold Thy radiant Face
 And view the Light concentred There,
 Infuse within my life Thy grace,
 Then take such life Thou lendest here !

REST.

OH, give to my poor wearied soul
The pinions of the Psalmist's dove,
To burst the bonds of Earth's control
And make her softer nest Above !

Yea, where the azure gilds the sky,
And zephyrs buoy the tired wing,
I fain would loose my soul to fly—
Where flowers their sweeter incense fling !

Far—far away from fever'd Earth
Where joy commingles but with pain,—
Up where the light first had its birth,
Oh, let me soar where Peace doth reign !

Yea, let me breathe the air of Heaven,
And taste celestial atmosphere,—
Let Vaults sublime, eterne, be given
To my faint soul so fetter'd here !

Let angels rock me soft to rest,
And vigils ever o'er me keep,
That nursed upon their holy breast
I may forget these tears I weep !

In that blest Lethe of repose,
Oh, plunge mine eager soul at last,
That these immortal eyes uncloset
To view the Scene all-unsurpassed !

SALAMIS.

CANTO I.

I.

ISLE of renown beneath serenest skies,
And placid now in modern liberty,
No warlike souls to champion thee arise
From out thy human mould of chivalry,—
No sword is needed now to flash thy might
And strike its lightning retribution on
The Persian's proud advance,—no bloody fight
To save dear Greece's home, for it was won
Long, long ago when thou wert young and strong
And Spartan blood was Spartan blood indeed,
Like kindling lava o'er each muscle strung,
Which rushed with patriotic, fatal speed
From the Vesuvian crater of thy heart !
Rest—rest, then, glorious Isle ; well hast thou earned
The present peace declining years impart—
Thou gladiator (who, when youthful, spurned
The universal martial world) hast now
Retired victorious from th'Olympic game
Of death or glory, and thy laurelled brow
Shall strive with Time's to wear its hoary fame !
The sun shines on thy blood-bought homely strand,
And with its crystal lightning marks thy shore
For the Ionian noble fatherland—
Sweet peace's heirloom left by sires of yore !
Long future suns may rise and set upon
Thy happy shore reposing thus in peace,
But now thine idle sword—from which suns shone
In whilome days, and dazzled foes of Greece—
May not so boldly mark the cadence in
Thy warlike fate : *thy* sun hath waned and set

In all the crimson glory thou didst win,—
 Like wandering and lost Hesperus, thou yet,
 In chivalry now faded from our sight,
 Hast only passed thy far horizon to
 Become a constellation in the night—
 A legacy for ages still to view !
 Let the Ægean wave beat on thy shore,
 Its mocking thunder echo all around
 Its spumy strength, and battle evermore
 Thy smiling rocks with moss historic bound,
 Its proud, amphibious crest no Xerxes bears
 With martial affluence and wanton might.
 Vain Persia, with her best blood-drops for tears,
 Swam on her bursting bladder out of sight :
 She, dancing with two thousand ships across
 The waving Rubicon, found far too late
 Her timbers frail as wings of th'albatross—
 Her wafting breeze, the whirlwind of her fate—
 Her masts, grim skeletons of pomp and power—
 Her rustling sails, sepulchral voices deep—
 Her haste, eternity prest in an hour—
 Her harbour, ruin—death, her only sleep !

2.

Thou, too, calm Athens, lonely in thy grief,
 And weeping self away in morbid ease
 From ancient martial glory all too brief,
 Hast left a record envious States would seize.
 Thy Sophocles, whose genius lit a fire
 Of metric wonder and yet held the sword
 As god-like as the pen which thrilled his quire,
 Sings now for thee not one transcendent word
 (Save by an echo floating now and hence
 Into th'abyss of vaulted, boundless time)
 Nor adds a bulwark to thy fearless fence
 By leading forth thy hosts to venial crime
 Of war, and bleeding double victor then !
 He'll sing no more, his melody is hushed ;

His sword hath rusted, ne'er to strike again,—

He sleeps, and nobler than the foes he crushed !

Thy Pericles (his arm and tongue a sword,

The one by Mars made cunning, th'other by

The goddess of all eloquence—each word

Dictated she, Minerva of the sky).

Thy Plato, herald of divinity.

Thy Socrates, fair Wisdom's worthy heir.

Thy Phidias, who with heaven did agree

(In thought sublime and plastic hand) as pair

To new-create and second life impart

In sculptured glory and immortal form,—

These and the rest who from thy mould did start

To play and vie with gods, have fed the worm

In its foul feast corruption doth supply ;

But, oh, they live in earthly glory yet,

And far less carnal, and immortally,—

Stript of their vile, polluting clay, they get

Themselves a purer self, and each one's soul

Dwells all-serenely in its heavenly works !

Thus shall they sit beyond Time's rude control

Or envy which perchance in nations lurks.

Within thy closing midnight, Athens, they

Shall be thy stars to mirror thus to thee

Transitioned glory—whispering that their day

Here o'er, in death they shine celestially !

Then, sorrow'd Athens, weep, oh, weep no more

For apotheosised and deathless sons !

In bidding thee farewell, and the proud shore

Of Attica—all, all more classic once,—

I wipe the tear from off thine agèd face,

And smooth thy mane snowed by four thousand

years !

Farewell, old sire ! Far ages shall do grace

The same to thee, and bottle all thy tears !

CANTO II.

I.

Far up the herbless rocks which dress the Isle
In rugged sternness and defiant front,
A grotto rears itself 'neath nature's smile,
But 'tis unnamed at the historic font,
As is its fair inhabitant and he
So sweetly blest to call her love his own.
Young Fabia's self affords its tenantry
(A tenant paradise would ne'er disown),
But her dear *heart* all-gently palpitates
Within an harbour softer and more green—
Lycaeus' breast,—which constantly vibrates
With fond monopoly o'er its sole queen.

2.

The moon is on the sea,—a lovely night !
The ocean heaves in gloried majesty,
And with all-cloudless heaven's inverted light,
Which makes the tide roll on celestially
In borrowed splendour to its conquering shore.
Like momentary icebergs brilliant,
The waves hoist foamy Babels, with a roar
Of like promiscuous sounds—waves luminant
Upon the Libyan liquid wilderness,
As unloosed stars usurping dolphins' right
To gambol in the deep with wantonness.
Each Phoenix-dying wave in flood of light
Makes all the ocean in its grandest awe
Enact the Hephæstia of the deep,—
Like souls of men escaping from the maw
Of earthly marble up the heavenly steep !

3.

Oh heavens, oh earth, oh cosmos vast and free,
What mortal brain can fully comprehend

Thy mystery's development, or be
Th'inhabitant of thee and mental friend
By traversing in spirit through the vault
Of thy profundity and marvellous
Abyss of secrecy? 'Tis not man's fault
If his intelligence be emulous
Of all the dazzling beauties in thy sphere,
And yearn, from his ambition's daring view,
To merge in essence which he sees so clear
On the horizoned gulf marked by thy blue !
His eye would minimise thy mysteries
Till they became subservient to his mind,
And thy divinity grew part of his
Mortality, and life and death combined !
"Man" ! What is this mere micro-speck of dust—
This partner of the bubbles of the earth—
The pedlar but of vanities and lust—
The twin of death, ephemera of birth ?
He plunges, like an earnest swimmer, in
The ocean of life's mystery profound,
But waves repudiate his claim to win
The pearls of knowledge which below abound.
Yea, even at this latest dial'd hour,
While boasting of an affluence of skill,
Man stands bewildered in his self-wrought power—
Philosophy repugnant to his will !
It teacheth him the limits of his mind—
That all his knowledge is but twilight still ;
That all his vaunted science fails to find
The master-key, had he a Cæsar's will !
Oh, God, thou never canst be slave to man !
If it were so, where would his Heaven be ?
All—all Thy mysteries he cannot scan
Shall be disclosed by Death, the only key ;
For, unembodied, shall his spirit trace
Its heavenly way on starry steps and view,
With eye rolled back on chaos' ample space,
Its pre-existence ; and far o'er the blue
Expansion of eternity, the eye
Shall swell, forgetting its mortality :

Though systems break, all light fail in the sky,
 The soul shall fix its own eternity !
 But *shall* our deathless mind be such a thing
 Of post-intelligence to float within
 Dilating space on nought but optic wing,
 Unlearning all the wisdom which had been
 Consummately imbibed while it was clay,
 By one pervading glance o'er realms profound ?
 Along th'elastic pathway shall it stray
 A voiceless vagrant—wanderer of no sound—
 A breathless mendicant about the sky—
 A dweller in the great republic bliss—
 A buoyant echo hushed, which scorns to die—
 Life's pendant, silent heir eterne to this ?
 Yea, shall this essenced principle but be
 A wingèd eye which rolls (perhaps in night)
 Its gaze back on the wreck of worlds, and see,
 O'er dizzy space all-unhorizoned quite,
 With its celestially tenacious glance,
 New gulfs of wonders start in bright array—
 Fresh dazzling worlds from chaos still advance—
 Rekindled planets navelling dull clay
 With myriad lives to people still the earth,—
 Beholding, with eternal-pinion'd sight,
 Creation's earthquake with no second birth,
 And all dissolve in one ethereal night ?

4.

Yea, all the night is loveliness itself
 And shines with beauties, earthly, heavenly,
 Which charms in luxury the liquid gulf
 Spread like ten thousand mirrors of the sky.
 Oh, God, the glory is most wondrous in
 Its hallowed majesty ! It dazes the
 Rude eye of man—so drunken by the scene—
 That views the whole, multi-divinity !
 Could we but now dissolve and make our home
 Within one variegated, glorious beam,
 Would not our soul—free from vile dust to roam—
 Be all-content, and carelessly ne'er deem

Its blissful Mecca lay one jot beyond ?
 To feel it lived in such all-glorious light,
 Would it of having paradise despond,
 Or think that *such* a day could usher night ?

5.

All hushed is Fabia's grotto—like a gem
 Which studs the rocky monarch's wrinkless brow—
 But lit from Luna's hallowed diadem
 Of virgin light. List to that voice, now low
 (As if it were an echoed breath, or a
 Deep sigh prolonging its exhausted note)—
 Now high (like dulcimer which fairies play,
 Or tinkling-silver sound which zephyrs float),—
 And rising on the nightly air so soft
 With placid moonbeams and so dewy with
 Heaven's vesper tears which she thus weeps so oft
 O'er day's secession (as o'er Jesu's death,
 In the chaotic evetide, Mary wept !).
 The voice, on its ethereal wing, doth melt,
 But, oh, so tenderly, as though 'twere kept
 From earth lest earth excessive virtue felt !
 The silent pause, like an enhancing point
 In intermittent music-bars, but gives
 More melody to this maid's voice disjoint—
 For it is Fabia's plaintive note revives.
 Yea, like a spirit o'er the scene, it dwells
 Within creation's poetry around.
 Ah, list ! The Siren-anthem sweetly swells—
 Her opening door releasing now the sound
 In dissipation on the midnight air.
 And see, she comes—Diana of the grove,—
 Who, with a sigh, breaks off her song. Her bare
 And white breasts heave, like winnow'd clouds of
 love
 Which veil a heaven ; or like soft virgin shells
 Which clasp in twin embrace a precious pearl ;
 Or sister'd snowy hills which sunset dwells
 In faint rose-tints upon. The lonely girl

Reclines within the porch and glances now
 Athwart the ocean's crystal magnitude,—
 Now turns from earth her alabaster brow,
 And, twinkling with the starry multitude
 In all-contagious lustre, her soft eyes
 Seem bluebells wooing the celestial dew.
 Her airy, Cosic robe about her flies,
 Like some fair cloud which floats betwixt our view
 And heaven ; or day-dawn showing us the sky.
 Her neck (the mould for Juno's favourite swan)
 Is all an India in itself—the eye
 Feasts on such nature's ivory more than
 It could did earth's base gems such charm immure.
 She clasps each hand (for orisons perchance)
 Fair as the moonlight—delicately pure—
 Of which it seems a part, as doth her glance
 Dart starlight in its angel-kindled blue.
 A sigh now marks the period to her thought,
 And she (with grace which Venus e'en would woo
 To rise in ampler charms the sea-spray wrought)
 Glides, with her sylph-like footsteps, towards a rock
 Near by enclothed with moss unsown by man,
 And leans to watch the ocean's cradle mock
 Its lulling efforts and its calmest plan
 Upon the sleepless waves. The tide rolls on,—
 As life,—blind to the scene above, around
 (Life's Atalantal ebb hath ever gone,
 Its sum of knowledge but a bubble found !).
 Lone Fabia's eyes imbibe the glowing view
 As, like lost stars in liquid azure, they
 In languor wander, doubting what to do.
 But list ! she breaks again into her lay :

“ Oh, heart, be still, and calmer beat :
 Soothe, soothe thy fevered pulse to rest ;
 Cool, soft as falling snow, the heat
 Thine Ætna-crater hath outprest.

“ Thy warmth be tempered as my brow
 Chilled by the zephyrs evening brings—

Yet nursing life which throbs below,
And waking silent music-strings.

“ Can I not be that albatross
Now soaring through the moonbeams to
The purple sky, and float across
Its beauteous bar of starry hue,—

“ Lodge in one of those glittering isles,
And with celestial countenance
Throw on the earth eternal smiles——”

“ Dear love, thy song is tremulous to-night !
Diana from the sky doth chide with me
By yon white cloud which veils from thee her light.
My Fabia, thus Lycæus welcomes thee !”
So saying, the alighted Grecian throws
His tender arm around her tenderer neck,
The lips’ carnations tasting ere she knows
Scarce love’s approach ; but she doth little reck
The suddenness of his arrival,—he
Is with her—’tis enough—no more she craves.
“ My sweetheart, dearest Fabia, promptly we
Must part : the Persian on the ocean paves
His hostile way, and Greece’s banners flaunt
The sky—her sails unfurl—her signals spread
To her brave sons whom Xerxes ne’er can daunt !
I dare not stay to pillow more thy head.
I’ll leave thee with the gods till my return
(Which may they all vouchsafe !). I scarce found time
To come to thee. Oh, how my pulses burn
In duty’s fevered haste ! Down let me climb
Again to yonder agitated shore.
’Tis said that when Æneas’ wanton hand
The myrtle boughs of Polydorus tore,
They wept in blood, resisting his demand :
And, oh, in parting thus perforce from thee,
My heart is bleeding, torn by ruthless war
Away from thine—twin blossoms on love’s tree !
Yet, may its vital purple not appear

To dye the battle-nursing, busy wave

Within the fight which day-break ushers soon !

One—one more kiss. Now, sweetheart, be thou brave.

I *must* be gone. Already doth the moon

Turn to a sickly yellow, warning me

That day is near"—“ Oh, I would come along,
Lycæus, and share life or death with thee !

Ah, when shalt thou return ? Perchance I'm wrong
To hold thee from protecting Greece's home ;

But yet, *thy* home is here within my heart,
Where not one foe can hurtful, thieving come.

Thou need'st not fight for that, nor from it start"—

“ Burn—burn my tongue for saying so, but, dear,

I dare not list to thy sweet converse more !

Farewell"—“ Ah, nay—nay—nay, Lycæus ; here

That word, though spoken with such grief, doth roar
Like yonder billows echoing so deep !

But since it *must* be so, just breathe a soft
And still good-night, which all these tears I weep

In crystal silence whisper to thee oft"—

“ Good-night, then, loved one, finally. I'm gone

Thus with a hurried kiss ; and to the gods

In tender synod I now leave thee lone.

My fond ‘ good-byes ’ repeat thy voiceful nods.”

He's gone,—his transient, love-hot presence, like

Th' ethereal flame that vividly doth quit

A favourite spot to with its lightning *strike*

Elsewhere and in created havoc flit.

The maiden's eye dilates o'er all the scene,

And fixes on the course Lycæus took :

But, like air's fiery beam there lately been,

His glimmering course scarce brooks one chasing look.

She saw—she felt—him there : she sees him trace

Each granite step declivitous : she sees

Him vanish past the final rock. Her face

She turns away, fanned by dawn's virgin breeze :

And tears witlin her deep blue eyes but seem

The sky's rich azure sprinkling dewdrops on

Two violets. With a sigh she says : “ Yon beam

Athwart the east is morning's birth begun,

And crystallises day's vitality.

I'll to my couch and vainly try to sleep :

If not in soft repose, yet wakeningly

I'll dream of him, forgetting that I weep ! "

She enters in her tower again, as if,

Like fading Luna, she retires from earth's

Rude gaze ; or some unseen celestial thief

Behind a cloud steals both, of equal births.

CANTO III.

I.

The sun bursts forth with kindling brilliance

And on the sea his dazzling mantle throws—

That sea which sports not now in dalliance,

But buoys two mighty empires' hostile prow,

Yet is that molten orb less vital than

The vengeful souls of Greece and Persia now

Contesting, as war's gladiators can,

For but a leaf which Fame doth coyly throw.

The darts—th'ethereal harbingers of death—

Fly as the lightning, wafting thus around

Destruction : on each head a glorious wreath

Is dropt, and every icy brow is bound

In mimic life, by mockery of the sun,

Which torridly looks jesting on the scene—

That red Vesuvius (an amphibious one).

The ship-split waves, in Phlegethonic spleen,

Curl up their pyramids of bloody spray,

And Death, like some Euphemus, sweeps the crest,

And grins the ghastlier at his holiday

(That Goth who in more rapture doth molest

And sack a mightier Rome than Cæsars swayed !).

The awful conflict rages madder still

And vies with time, for night hath now arrayed

In agate mantle each less fevered hill.

2.

Like those revolving swords o'er Adam's head,

The Persians' steel strikes mortals' mortal fate.

Lycæus, heedless of the live and dead,
 On board fights gallantly, but all too late.
 He and his Greek cohorts have stormed the ship—
 They are all slaughtered by her too vast foe ;
 But he—as though some Gorgon from her lip
 Breathed silently his doom—seems, in the throe,
 To mark the foemen's vengeance with his life,
 Or satiate them by captivity.
 With senses numbed by the continued strife,
 He falls upon the ground (but not till he
 Hath left his quivering blade within the last
 Opposing Persian's heart), yea, o'er the group
 Of those he singly slew—the lightning past
 Which darted from his sword—his strength doth
 droop !

3.

When next he opes his eyes 'tis in a cell
 The ship provides : his hands and feet are gyved :
 As black as midnight, darkness here doth dwell :
 No sound, save echoed thuds and voice short-lived ;
 Gloom seems the guardian-demon of the place.
 Ah ! Hush ! The creaking door is opening now :
 A flickering taper comes, but o'er the face
 Of its kind bearer shadow's veil doth throw.
 The figure—mingling with the darkness, save
 The genial flame of independent life—
 Approaches farther in the wooden grave
 And nearer to the victim of late strife.
 So soft and silently it moves (ah, sure
 The noiseless thing must be the vestal of
 The solitary place) and doth allure
 Some hope within his heart so full of love
 That its excess but makes him thus despair,
 To think he might not Fabia view again.
 His wondering, yet half fearful, eye doth stare
 Upon th'advancing light that soothes his pain.
 The form is close, and bends o'er him its face.
 " Thanks to the gods, it is a woman's eye ! "

Lycæus crying thus, doth quickly trace

Her features (his hope's rainbow heavenly),
But foreign all—the eye, the lip, the cheek.

The twin dark eyes (of stars the kindred stamp)
Smile sympathy in his. Within a creek

Above his head she fixes now the lamp,
Then kneels beside him proffering miscalled food.

“ Brave Greek, my task hath brought me here to thee
With this thy meal, which hunger may deem good.

Rise,—be revived, though ne'er, alas, be free ! ”
Lycæus meets her gaze and then replies :

“ And canst thou pity me, thy country's foe,
And for him waste a sigh, and sympathise ?

Thou tender maid, kind nurse, this one thing know,
That were it free again, mine arm should strike

As deadly—ay, more so—against *my* foes,
Thy *friends*, till victory and death alike

Contended how the trophy to dispose !
Then, girl, Lycæus dares usurp not one

Unmerited warm beat of thy great heart.
Go, thou fair Persian,—thy kind task *is* done.”

A tear within the maiden's eye doth start.
“ A tear ! Oh, woman, such a pearl for Greece

Is nobler to her than her triumph made
To-day, for thine's the sign of *love* with peace.”

“ Nay, noble Greek ; thou seest a Persian maid,
But Persia's foe alike with thee—at least

The foe to those who ride here on the wave ;
For, soldier, happiness in me hath ceased—

I am to savage wills the gentle slave,”
The sobbing girl, named Xena, thus doth speak.

“ Most callous fate to doom thee to such lot !
Oh, madly now afresh I strive to break

These links to give *thee* freedom thou'st forgot !
Vain—vain the struggle ”—“ Hush ! ” the jet-eyed maid

All-timidly replies ; “ methinks I can
Thy worthy effort to gain freedom aid.

'Tis not mere sympathy, brave Greece's man,
Which moves my heart—that heart (canst not observe ?)

In fervour beating at my breast, like to

The sea's wild current 'neath each swelling curve
 Of foam that tells of life though hid to view ;
 And like Vesuvius, throbbing ere its fire
 Leaps into vivid sight from its deep tomb ;
 Or as the trembling earth in fever dire
 Ere it doth yawn to show its secret womb !
 Nay—nay, ah, nay, 'tis not kind thoughts alone
 Which stir my soul to humbly offer thee
 Thy life : it is—oh, how should I atone
 Did I offend by telling it to thee ?
 And yet thine eye is gentle, wooing, too ;
 And that all-noble scar upon thy brow
 Pleads with its crimson tongue while it I view :
 Thy youth, too,—all, and more, invite me now.
 Dear Greek, 'tis love—'tis purest love for thee
 Which with its halcyon voice commands mine
 act ! ”

Thus whispering, Xena (but too tearfully)
 Vows with her blushes the important fact,
 And hides her olive face in amber'd hands—
 Enacting Sorrow leaning o'er the urn
 Which locks the tenant there in marble bands
 (The vagrant soul to Homeland doth return !).
 Lycæus heaves a sigh of deep regret
 As with commingled feelings he replies :
 “ Impassioned slave, canst thou not try forget—
 Nay, hate—this one of Persia's enemies,
 And try to think thy love could nobler bless
 Some worthier heart ”—“ Ah, Greek, no—no ! Dost
 thou

Not know that love is not vicarious ?
 The flower-wooed bee that hums her honeyed vow
 Is less sincere than woman's fondest troth.
 Those words of thine, though zephyr-like they come,
 Fall yet so chilling and so killing, both,
 Upon my heart—of love the flowery home,—
 Like the all-softly falling flakes whose snow
 Alights with dainty and mute touch on the
 Too early bud to shock its bloom, although
 Most delicate in act, in virtue free.

But whether thou returnest it or not,
I cannot—oh, I cannot help but love !
And 'tis enough for me to know thy lot
I can make sweet—thy fetters all remove.
Nay—nay, thou must not answer, for I'll take
No thanks, no protest, caution, no contempt.
To-night, and when our captain's not awake,
I'll take his signet, or in the attempt
Gain deathly freedom from life's slavery !
I've access to his chamber, and when all
Around is still I'll go and venially
Commit a fault—a ' theft ' I should miscall.
My task is easy then, for that rare gem
Will be my talisman and make those slaves
Who now enslave myself : I'll baffle them
With its official magic till it saves
Thee"—“ *And thyself, thou noble, loving wench,*”
Lycaeus' grateful tongue responds : “ for, by
The gods, I'll ne'er these irons from me wrench
Unless with me thou have co-liberty !
I'll take thee with me to my Grecian home,
And Fabia will be sister unto thee.
Prepare, then, slave no longer now, to come,
And with us learn what it is to be free.
Thou'rt silent, and a curious light is in
Thine eye of brightest liquid ebony,—
Thus midnight doth the deep pool illumine,
But, oh, it sparkles coldly, foreignly !
'Tis said that stars have language with their light,
And whisper echoes more divine than earth's ;
Thine orbs' soft rhetoric, which floats so bright,
I cannot read, *too* heavenly were their births.
Why art thou silent ? Is't not better be
A Grecian woman free than Persia's slave ?
I promise thee that thou shalt happily
Reside in thy new home across the wave,
And——” “ *Fabia !* ” Xena half unto herself
Doth whisper. “ *Ay, that name,*” Lycaeus says,
“ *Calls from these chains my soul swift o'er the gulf
To greet its dearest mate who anxious stays.*”

Brief be the time until we meet again,
 And brief thy slavery in this vain land."
 Now Xena tries to speak—tries not in vain—
 And says: "Then, youth, this—this fair Fabia's
 hand
 Is thine, and thou and she are one in love?
 I dared to think thy noble heart was free,
 And that responsive to mine own 'twould move
 In sole affection, and thus Xena be
 Free from her servile yoke and only live
 Slave to her captivating captive's will!
 But yet, oh yet, I know thou wilt forgive
 Poor Xena's heart, and let it love thee still,—
 Nay, if she but releases thee she'll try
 And be content to know she hath restored
 Thy life to her who claims more worthily!
 I go, brave Greek (resigned, no less adored)
 To do the task of penal love with speed—
 That task the sweetest in my slavery yet!
 I go to soon return. Take thou no heed
 Of woe. Thy hand I kiss,—all more forget!"
 Thus saying, she, with fairy lightness, flees
 (The lamp, too, taking) through the heavy door,
 And leaves the former gloom—as when one sees
 Heaven's last star melt on midnight's inky shore.
 But her last words fall only on deaf ears,—
 Lycæus hath some time lapsed into sleep,
 Which faintness wooed; and in his dreams he hears,
 Perchance, his Fabia calling from her steep.

4.

The large and lonely lamp shines dim and low
 Within the chamber of the captain stern
 And warlike; and its flickering light doth throw
 A mocking beam—all-greyish doth it burn.
 The warrior-mariner reclines upon
 His couch of crimson velvet, fast asleep—
 His fighting o'er—his country's praises won.
 Now see, his slave inside doth noiseless creep:

Her eye with fixed determination shines
And fiercely rolls around the twilight room
(So night with lightning's vivid flash combines)
Which seem to glisten with prophetic doom.
'Tis Xena. Softly she approacheth the
Embroidered couch whereon the tyrant sleeps :
The signet-finger seeing covered, she
Considereth, but constantly she keeps
Her burning eye upon the slumbering face.
The jewelled hand beneath his head doth rest :
How can she touch it and escape disgrace—
Ay, death itself—by waking him ? What's best ?
But she hath come provided, nor with shame
Would bear discovery should he awake :
Her life is only one in mocking name,
And all she risks for her dear Grecian's sake.
She closer goes and notes the heavy breath,
Proclaiming that her master sleeps profound ;
And lightly stretching forth her hand, she hath
Nigh touched his head, which, drowsy, turns around
Upon the pillow slightly : Xena starts
(Affrighted briefly, lest he waking be)
And, swift as sun-stroke, her small hand now darts
Unto her girdle, and all-glitteringly
Her prompt stiletto flashes vengeful fire
As it is poised upon death's pinion :
But 'tis not needed,—he doth still respire
In soundest sleep. She once more hath begun
To make the venial theft : her hand is near
The wretch's pillow : with a touch of air
Her fingers pass beneath his guarding ear,
And twine around the circled jewel there
Upon the baser finger : slowly, soft,
She passeth now the metal coil : 'tis done—
'Tis off ! Ah ! Curst be hovering Fates aloft !
He starts—awakes,—an oath (his final one)
Is smothered on his lip,—he breathes no more !
Dyed with the crimson of his cloven heart,
The slave's stiletto weeps a tyrant's gore
In Xena's hand, now an unvirgin'd dart.

Enclasping fast the ring, and gazing on

The yet warm point, and murmuring: "Now I'm free
To love and die! Oh, Greek, thou'rt dearly won!",

She quickly flees the room, but noiselessly.

5.

Lycaeus still is sleeping peacefully,

And all is calm and silent in his cell

(Blest sleep which lends us eagles' plumes to fly

From woe, and in a Lethean heaven to dwell!),

When through the door less strangely Xena bounds,

And quickly hastens to the captive's side,

Unlocking—heeding not their clanging sounds—

His manacles: he, trance-like, opens wide

His brief-astonished eyes. "Rise—rise, dear youth,"

Warm Xena cries, whilst waving high the ring;

"For thou art free,—behold the sparkling truth!

Thy chains are shivered: rise, then,—quickly fling

Them from thee, and command a home-bound boat!"

Lycaeus rises and hath proof surveyed

As o'er the idly-lying irons float

His gladdened eye: but on her dainty blade

It also rests and droops, too, with the gaze.

"Ye gods! That red stiletto in thy hand!",

The trembling horror-struck Lycaeus says.

"Oh, say (and all the gods join their command)

Thou Persian *woman*, is it—is it blood?

By great Diana, thou dost smile! Thine eye

Glares with a foreign lustre, and not good!

Like earthquake's is that heavy sigh!

Oh, speak, fair slave"—"Hold! Ne'er a slave again!

Who made me slave is——" "Dead?" "Ay, if
thou wilt

Anticipate my word! And not in vain:

Thou liv'st but in his *death*—in his blood spilt"—

"Ay, by his death I'd live, and nobly, too;

But, woman, by his *murder* dare I live?"

She darts an instant's glance at him. "Greek, you

I've loved—will love—though love to me you ne'er
can give:

For that dear object mine affection woos,
 I'd dare all things, nor falter e'en in blood !
 Dost think that *slaves* 'twixt life and death should
 choose

For love's dear sake, though that the latter stood
 All-bloodily before their great desire ?

For love *thou* bravest death—nay, *murder*,—Greek,
 Within the ruddy fight, and in thine ire

Thou butcherest the man whom thou dost seek,
 From 'patriotism,' mere romantic love—

That man who ne'er hath harmed thy single
 hair—

Thy friend, since not *thy* foe, thou dost remove.

Dare slave, then, not with warrior pair ? "

Lycæus answers : " Girl, in battle fair

The sword propitiates its scarlet deed :

Not so th'assassin's knife he doth unbare

To secret strike,—such *must* from guilt proceed ! "

She nearer glides to him and gazes with

Her suing, lightning eyes in his, and says :

" The *heart* is love's true home : to wear the wreath

Of triumph, love strategically slays,

As athletes all manœuvre in the fight,

And cunningly discharge the arrow in

Their foemen's heart, in dark as well as light.

Is *that*, vain warrior, equally a sin ? "

Lycæus soon exclaims : " But in the war

The foe, anticipative, hath the chance

Of counter-action, and can rear a bar :

In sleep beneath th'assassin's hovering lance,

The prostrate, weaponless and forlorn wretch

Knows not the death-descending, coward fate ! "

With lips grown ashen, Xena doth outstretch

Her weaponed, agitated hand, and state :

" Know, love for love should all things nobly brave,

Ignoring scruples, and *prove* love indeed."

" Is that the law," he asks, " this side the wave ? "

Hot Xena answers : " Greek, 'tis Persians' creed ! "

Her fearful eye looks on the rusting blade,

Then on Lycæus with its voiceful fire,

Whilst pausing in dumb eloquence. "Dear maid
(Thou'rt dear to me, though guilty was thine ire,
For thou didst all to give *me life* again),

Oh, take away those molten eyes of thine
Whose flames, lit by thy love, burn all in vain—
As stars upon a trackless desert shine!

Say how I should repay the life I owe

To thee and faithful will I——" "Ay, I'll tell
Thee," she replies, "since thou dost seek to know:

Give me thy love, and let me with thee dwell"—
"The gods know well I cannot—dare not—do

This thing! I cannot make thee wife, fond maid,
For Fabia——" "Ah, that name again! Look you,
Unfettered Greek, on Xena whom thou'st made
What she is now, here standing too unchained.

But go thou to thy home and lover now;
Vie in sweet love until its fount be drained,

And till it lives but in its echoed vow:
Thou hast my prayer for happiness and peace.

Farewell, too lovèd Greek! And when thou art
In Fabia's arms, where bliss can never cease,

Remember that a loving Persian's heart
Was cleft and thrown away that thou might'st live.

Less nobly died the gallant hearts in fight
On Salamis's wave (though e'er alive)—

They gave a life when by the foe prest tight;
But Xena sacrifices *heart* and life!"

She bares her breast, and now a vivid flash
Darts from her momentary circling knife:

Lycæus, with a chamois' step, doth dash
In fever forward, grasping that small hand

(Too stained already) which one instant more
Had sheathed it in her heart at love's command,
And hurls the rescued blade upon the floor!

"Athena! Hold! Oh, Persian, till this hour,"

Lycæus cries, "I never saw true love!
Nor could I sum it,—feel its passion's power!

But, fatal woman, by the gods above,
Abhor such act,—love is life's thing, not death's!

We'll quit for aye this foul place hand in hand,

And in fair Greece we'll draw united breaths
 Of freedom ! Ay, on that most homely strand
 My Fabia (e'en in gratitude) will be
 Thy sister, and thou'lt be the same to me"—
 "Nay—nay, good Grecian, to be near to thee
 As still the slave who bends to both the knee,
 For Xena 'twere enough," she promptly says,
 And feels Lycæus' arm around her neck,
 Whilst she her head upon his shoulder lays.
 Both parting now, Lycæus towards the deck
 Turns eye and foot. The slave advances too,
 And speaks : "Come, then ; this signet shall make
 way
 For us : but we must hasten ere they view
 My reeking deed. A boat across the bay
 Shall soon convey us into safety's port."
 One little moment more and they are gone—
 The captive and *his* captive now consort.
 Thus Salamis to *them* was lost and won !

CANTO IV.

I.

The morning sun gilds the Ionian isle,
 And lays a crown of silver on the shore :
 Its borrowed sparkle makes the foliage smile :
 The naked rocks are naked now no more :
 The birds with music wake the drowsy grove,
 And heavenly elements conjoin to make
 The earth prophetic of celestial love,—
 The sun's archangel now doth dead things wake
 (Save Persia 'neath red Salamis's foam).
 But why doth not the sun kiss that lone bower ?
 Why not the birds make near it their old home ?
 Why nature's sad desertion of that tower
 Which once at least marked Fabia's hallowed spot ?
 She is—or was—the guardian spirit here :
 Why, then, seems nature to have her forgot ?
 Why need an Endor's hag to cry : "Appear" ?

2.

“ Dost see yon headlong rock so near to heaven
 (Which makes diviner the dear spot) where all
The verdure, by spring’s synod green, is given
 Luxuriant bloom,—where birds so sweetly call
Their wooing mates ; and where the sun doth strike
 His silvery lightning, making all the scene
A local heaven,—where sight and sound alike
 Seem cunningly mortality to screen
And throw a vesture which enchants it with
 Unearthly beauty, poetry sublime ?
Ah, Xena, there doth beautier Fabia breathe ! ”
 Thus speaks Lycæus (in his mental climb
Impatient up the steep retreat of love)
 To her, once Persia’s slave, now his,
As they together o’er the harbour rove
 (Commutual spoils from bloody Salamis !)
Within a skiff usurped by furtive power,—
 One vying with the other to rejoice
In resurrected life for unmarked hour,
 And to be slave to love’s all-tempered voice.

3.

“ At last, my native shore, I stand on thee !
 Here—here at least I am a child again
And dwell in happiness of infancy
 As when I rambled o’er thy tidal mane.
Good-night—good-bye—farewell, to other scenes,
 But ne’er, oh ne’er, my native land, to thee !
New faces, beautier visions, may find means
 To oft beguile of home’s sweet memory ;
But their false smiles will dwindle into frowns,
 The dazzling scenes dissolve to nothingness :
And, with ambition’s all-receding crowns,
 To childhood’s spot we turn for it to bless !
Peace, then, my home, for ever be to thee !
 May Plenty o’er thee empty her full horn !

And though this voice beyond the tomb must flee,
 Urn thou my *heart*, dear land, where it was born ! ”
 The fervid youth salutes his homeland thus
 As on its pebbled strand his boat alights
 And he plants now his foot in joyousness,
 Whilst his wet, swimming eye absorbs the sights.
 “ This, Greek, is, then, thy home ? A lovely spot !
 And by thy graciousness thou mak’st it mine.
 By Xena Persia ever be forgot,
 But not *thy* home or aught which breathes of thine !
 I long to meet thy lady and restore
 To her that life which quickened mine in death ;
 And, by the waves methodic on this shore,
 Count o’er the moments of my freedom’s breath,”
 Fond Xena cries, in love’s contagion still.
 “ Come, maid,” Lycæus says, “ forget thy tomb
 Of slavery, and with a living will
 Ascend this hill with me till thou art come
 To thy new friend, thy foster-sister, and
 The guardian nymph of e’en both thee and me.
 See, the ascent is nothing as thy hand
 Is clasped in mine and we step cautiously.”
 Up, up and onward o’er the granite path
 They wend, oblivious of a later fate.
 With pinion’d feet of love’s talaria hath
 Lycæus often skipt it, save of late.
 Straight to the tower he with Xena goes,
 But marking, with a dubious eye, the spot
 So negligently rude, o’er which day throws
 Prophetic streaks of grey, as ’twere forgot.
 The turret door is closed, and ivy twines
 Across it ; whilst the honeysuckle clings
 Around the hinge, whose scented love combines
 With sole possession : no bird matins sings :
 The grass around is fresh, untrodden, too,
 Some unseen oracle within the air
 Seems to suggest, with awe : “ Unwelcomed, you
 As Nature’s, not love’s, pilgrims may repair
 Here, where sits Silence as the chiefest guest ! ”
 Yea, to Lycæus this once lively scene

Is love's Golgotha now. Hope in his breast
 (Which till this hour a beacon there had been)
 Hath caught the too contagious gloom around.

He speaks more in a whisper than in voice
 To Xena—who hath made no sound—

And says : " The gods have made some change-
 ful choice !

Here did she dwell,—here I kissed her good-bye—

Here on this rock her heart, like Hero's torch,
 Glowed with love's guiding, guarding flame while I

Was absent : but, like that abandoned porch,
 My tongue is orphan'd—I can speak no words !

Perchance—ah, happiest thought !—perchance she be
 But lingering in the town to learn which swords

With victors are expected from the sea.

Come, Xena, we will search the isle's each nook

Till we have found her. Come." A sigh with tear
 Contends to paint his sorrow by a look.

Quoth Xena : " But, good Grecian, though not here,
 Thy lady may be no less safe and well.

Because the eye sees not, why should the heart
 Doubt too ? Penelope in faith did dwell

For twenty years till her fond counterpart
 Returned to lift her melancholy mind.

Be like that princess thou, and Fabia be
 Ulysses kept but by some adverse wind.

Until ye meet, I'll still be slave to thee,
 For life can have for me no lighter yoke."

" Until we meet," Lycæus tearfully

Doth echo long, but sobs his murmurings choke :

His dreaming soul seems wandering wild and
 free,

Like that of Hermotimus. With one look

Back at the idle door, the wild-grown tower,—
 With eye dewed by the farewell glance it took,

He quits with Xena his once heavenly bower.
 His sad soliloquy : " Until we meet ! "

Shall linger there in echoes meltingly :

The friendly path shall miss his busy feet ;

But shall that tower his tryst with Fabia be ?

Yea, *shall* they “ meet again ” ? Go, ask that rock
Which nuptials makes with her within its cave :
With her bright burial, verdure there doth mock
Death’s wilderness ! Beat shall the less pure wave
’Gainst Salamis’s shore, but ne’er again
Shall Fabia’s pulse against Lycæus’ heart !
“ Oh, where art thou ? ”, Lycæus, less in vain,
Ask Death, who Fabia and thyself did part !



THE VASE.

As flowers in vases so 'tis with
The human friendships : as they fade
From out our hearts we twine a wreath
Of newer blossoms love hath made.

TO —.

WHEN winter fans the gentle rose
And withers its all-beauteous blush,
Its perfume lost, no more it throws
Pure incense in its blighted hush :
But, tender maid, may summer be
For ever in thy budding heart,
That wintry sorrow touch not thee,
Nor e'en an autumn o'er thee dart !

TO *.

DEAR lady, in thine eye (heaven's burning star
Revealing splendour of the sky divine)
Shines such angelic fire that from so far
It woos past earth this human soul of mine.
Yea, in that sparkling and cerulean book
I'd read my worst of recreant mortal's fate :
And from its dazzling pages by a look
Learn sweetly how to earthly love translate !

TO THE SAME.

HE who hath watched the snowy lily bloom,
And in its perfume tasted breath of heaven ;
Or seen its angel-whiteness burst the gloom—
Its dazzling kisses to the sky re-given,—

Could he behold such sublimate of grace
 Droop, wither, perish, sadly in the shade,
 Without translating pity in his face,
 And thus be *man* whom Nature too hath made?

ALSO TO THE SAME, ON HER BIRTHDAY.

*(Written on a card which bore the figure of a sun-dial
 impressed on pearl, and also pictures of butterflies.)*

UPON the dial of each precious year,
 Oh, may the sun for thee bright hours relate !
 And into pearls be changed each wasted tear ;
 And Psyche's blissful wing guard all thy fate !

TO * *.

LIKE heavenly morn-break, lady, thou
 Dividest dark to usher light ;
 And crown'st mine upturned, gazing brow
 With thine aurora while 'tis night.
 Oh, may my heart be constant day,
 Blest with the sky-lit ray of thee !
 For more than this I dare not pray,
 Thou fixèd star of memory !

When sets the brilliant orb of day
 And fades away from mortal sight,
 It rises with a newer ray
 On other land to break the night.
 Thine eye (born, lady, in
 The azure nearest to the sun)
 In languid sleep doth illumine
 A Pole whose light was unbegun :
 When closed, its lid doth moonlight wear
 Until the brighter day returns
 With lustre from a beautier sphere,
 And to the earth more heavenly burns.

The crown which Ariadne wore
 Of seven stars, was made in heaven
 A constellation : one ray more
 Would by thy sun-rise hair be given.
 And Berenice's starry tress
 Within the holy vault eterne,
 Beside thine own would glimmer less,
 For thine could teach hers how to burn.

When Iris throws her beauteous arch
 In dazzling colours o'er the earth,
 For hope man need not further search,—
 'Tis whispered there with vivid breath.
 Oh, lady, in mine hour of doom
 Be thou the rainbow of my soul :
 Thy brightest wing then past the tomb
 Waft me to heaven 'neath thy control !

TO * * *.

IN the blue mirror of thine eye
 I'd read my sternest doom, dear maid ;
 For, like its light all-heavenly,
 Its soft decree were blessed made.

TO THE SAME.

(On her birthday.)

THE dewdrops on the lily tend
 To give the bloom vitality :
 Dear lady, thus may Heaven send
 More blessed birthdays unto thee !

ALSO TO THE SAME.

(With portrait.)

AN, could I from my portrait start
 Responsive to the force divine
 Thine all-magnetic eye doth dart
 (Itself a heaven to bless and shine)

I'd rise triumphant from my sloth
 And seek new-kindled life with thee :
 The barrier burst which parted both,
 By thy dear side I'd even be
 Far past the power of death itself,—
 The Stygian torrent would be crossed
 Already, and no other gulf
 Could cause my soul to then be lost !
 Yea, from the mocking frame I'd start
 And pass the Hellespontic bar
 With e'en but nothing for my chart
 Save that true, blazing flame afar
 From out thine eye, which might have lit
 E'en Hero's torch and shamed its fire.
 As some kind angel kindled it
 (Thus meaning it to ne'er expire)
 From Heaven's Sanctuary Lamp eterne,
 Oh, blame me not, my dearest maid,
 If I, whose eye doth tamer burn,
 Must be by thine a victim made
 And helpless shrink, while gazing there,
 Back to mine own mortality !
 Old Solon sagely did declare
 We but in death can happy be :
 He spoke the truth, for thy fond eye
 Darts a new Gorgon's doom on me :
 And yet, oh yet, though thus I die,
 My bliss beyond is heaven with thee !

TO * * * *.

How oft we pluck our dearest flower
 Too fondly from a cypress bower,
 And to our breast fold close the bloom
 To wither in that softest tomb,—
 Torn from its vital stem, its scent
 Is buried 'neath love's monument !
 But, lady, may the blossoms *all*
Thou pluckest from the myrtle fall,

That their undying fragrance may
 Live with the green their leaves display.
 Oh, could I but one petal be
 Around the smallest bud with thee,
 Perchance my life—more mortal than
 Thine own—would eke its little span
 By being in thy bosom's vase
 Preserved by light heaven therein has !
 Nursed on thy heart's all-gentle beat,
 My frailsome bloom new life would meet,
 Nor once could perish while thine eye
 Glanced sunshine there celestially !

TO * * * * *

WHEN summer's twilight softens evening's hour,
 And the all-gentle dewdrops kiss the flower ;
 When sheds the moon her hallowed glow serene ;
 When an aurora makes sublime the scene,
 Ah, then, yea then reflection grows a part
 Of heavenly virtue, and the sorrowed heart
 Is wooed by sympathy, and feels a spell
 From kindred elements within it dwell
 To soothe each throe the memory buries there,—
 The soul, commingling with the circling air,
 Declines from its embodiment and feels
 Transfused in essence which around it steals !
 Deem not, then, lady, that my lonely heart
 Can banish its ethereal counterpart,
 For like an airy spirit thou dost flit
 Seen and unseen about me, and doth sit
 Upon my memory like some sibyl of
 My destiny, my peace, it may be love.
 I know that in thine own remembrance I
 Oft dwell a welcome habitant : a sigh,
 I also feel, will sometimes mount upon
 Thine unkind lips at thought of love unwon—
 “ Unwon ” ? Nay—nay ; it is already thine,
 As 'twas when first our hearts did secret twine,

Like honeysuckle's wreath around the rose
 Which wildly with the stranger tendrils grows :
 But, ah, thy little hand hath reft the flowers
 From their soft union ere the summer's hours
 Of sunshine are all spent—that hand I deemed
 Of nature's softest velvet, unbeseeemed
 Its promise to enclasp mine own and make
 The twain so linked that naught but death could break !
 The noonday sunshine weeps itself away ;
 Night robs the twilight of its golden ray ;
 The rose's blush 'neath autumn's breath doth fade ;
 The star from lustre soon doth retrograde :
 My soul the same dejection, lady, feels
 As thy too unexplained coldness steals,
 Like winter's ether, o'er it, freezing the
 Late moisture of mine eye that it must be
 Now nought but ice—a sparkle, yet so cold,—
 Its tale now petrified late warmly told !
 Thou once, methought, wast the doomed vestal of
 My heart ; but now the torch, lit by my love,
 Thou hast extinguished, and the former gloom
 Pervades the cell—the silence of the tomb !
 Why thou wouldst have us part, and break'st
 Love's golden circling links so dear, and shak'st
 The tender bond asunder, only thou
 Dost know ; but still, in parting, hear my vow :
 Since thou hast taught me how to say farewell,
 I'll dream thou'rt mine till death shall break the spell !

LINES.

(Written in an album.)

LIGHT is distilled from dark—the morn from night,—
 To give the rose a heaven's nativity :
 The dark clouds alchemise the dewdrop bright
 To share the morning-star's sublimity :
 And lo ! the dazzling sun's magnificence
 (God's lesson to Man's pompous speck of dust)

Bows meekly at the Eastern door, and thence
 Breathes softly Earthwards, Nature to adjust.
 Thus, maiden, moves my pen at thy behest
 To "something write" upon this page of thine.
 But whence my words? That lexicon were best
 (Academy divine!) which bright doth shine
 Within thine eye's arcane, Promethean fire.
 Dear lady, o'er thy rose-bud life may Heaven
 In one sweet flood Its light and scent inspire,
 And blessings, till Its store hath all been given!

LINES.

(Written in another album.)

THE violet, wakened by heaven's chastening tear-drop,
 turns
 Its virgin petals to the cloudless morning sky
 To loan the azure which God's lamp so beauteous burns,—
 To breathe its scent (earth's incense) back celestially.
 Sweet maid, thus thou but wakest in my slumbering soul
 The winnow'd virtue of its power all-spiritualised,
 By choosing unworth *me* to write on this thy scroll
 (How blest were he on thy soft *heart* to be incised!).

LINES.

(Similarly written.)

As the sun when it sets in the night
 Still awakes with each morning to shine,
 So may each of thy hopes on their flight
 E'er arise to thy life illumine!

TO * —.

(On visiting together the ruins of Clifford Castle, near Hay.)

WHEN out of chaos sprang to sight'
 A lovely paradise of bloom;
 When darkness changed to heavenly light,
 And Eden was the only tomb,

It was by labour all-divine
 Earth thus became Elysium.
 And, gentle lady, sure 'tis thine
 The same creative task sublime
 To raise amidst the wreck of time
 Fair foliage ever green and sweet ;
 And by thy presence cause to climb
 The withering ivy, now more meet
 To fold the fragrant stones in love ;
 And with thine eyes' celestial fire
 To thus the shadows all remove
 Far from the ruined tower's spire.
 If when he passes this same spot
 Old Time should pause in wonder at
 Th'Arcadian change (of heaven begot)
 I, blest myself, will answer that
 An *angel* breathed upon the scene—
 Another lowly Merope
 Who quit the sky to make serene
 The earth by immortality !

TO "MUMMIE."

"A ll is but vanity, the Preacher saith."
 M ankind's experience proves such wisdom, too.
 O ft—sweetly oft—this human dictum hath
 R eversed philosophy: at least it *you*
 E xcepts ; for others may both fail and flee—
 T hou shin'st my lighthouse o'er the sea !

THE PRINCESS.

CANTO I.

I.

THE sun is shedding forth his evening glow,
And tropic brilliance dwindles fair and slow
O'er all the South Sea isles ; and Toobanai
Is no less lovely on the dying day,
For on her aromatic strand the waves
Spread their gold fringe and ornament the caves
With ruby spray rich-tinted by the west
As drowsy Phœbus crouches there to rest
And, like a warrior from the fierce affray,
Within his crimson cloak he sleeps till day.
The soaring palm-leaves gently palpitate
Responsive to the voices which relate
In breathful accents zephyrs' history,
And fairy whispers floating tranquilly.

2.

There is a grotto—matchless nature's style—
Formed like a shell out of a rocky pile ;
O'erhung with plantain, and encircled by
Scant herbiage and pebbles ever dry
And unsuffused by the amphibious spray ;
Shells, variegated, deck the rustic way
Which forms the entrance from the beach thereto ;
And stones, the moulds of gems, are lying too
In negligence along the pathway long ;
The birds vie mutually in vesper-song ;
The stars are not yet lit, but keep their light ;
The glow-worm neither welcomes yet the night.

3.

But who approacheth from the thicket nigh
Whose form displays the tint of night (her eye
The god-lit moonbeam linking heaven to earth
And giving each new day its glorious birth) ?
Nay, see,—the captured stars at length are lit
As o'er the sky her heaven-born optics flit
(Those beacons all along th'eternal shore
Afford to earth no wooing virtue more,
Or further awe, with twinkling light sublime,
Than this maid's eyes to man of either clime).
Yea, like the cunning, starry, diamond black,
Her eye doth throw all heaven's glories back.
Her sculptured form is glassed with ebony,
And, in habiliment of nature, she
Attests her Maker's imitateless skill,
And proves His mould knows but One cunning Will :
She stands the blushless, artless nature's type—
A flower wild but with its blossoms ripe.

4.

Arrived before the cave, she enters in
And, like the gentle savage she hath been
Since first the tropic light beamed on her face
And thereon shadows cunningly did trace,
Takes her siesta full upon the ground,
And gazes on the billows, marks their sound.
Stretched like a Houri at th'eternal Gate
Of Moslems' Paradise, she, in no state
Of courtly, gay environments, doth place
Her head within her agate hand—her face
Close at the aperture,—now looks into
The sky, which turns to purple from late blue,
And, as if they communion native had,
Her glistening eyes now twinkle bright, now sad,
Responsive to the tremor of the stars,
Although no sorrow this dark form debars
From savage happiness and heathen peace,

Nor Time's one haggard line is on her face :
 Yea, like the pearl which blackness renders rare,
 She shines a jewel in her beauty bare.
 She wears a hue unfading on her cheek,
 Not like the flowers' bloom within that creek.
 Her bounteous eyes seem like two meteors dropt
 From some angelic intriguer aloft,
 Upon a lake of opal, floating there
 In lost, promiscuous fellowship the pair.
 Her woollen curls envelop all her brow,
 And, as if animate, seem to avow
 Protection to the charms so shaded there :
 Like folding midnight-clouds appear her hair,
 Which miserly permit the gazing earth
 To catch a moonbeam at its very birth ;
 Or like the densest period of the night
 Which leaves a soft aurora's placid light.
 Reposing thus—without a gilded throne—
 This isle's unsceptred princess is alone.

5.

The twilight past, the night hath closed around
 And left the isle in sombre beauty bound—
 The sea upheaving and dispersing light,
 And breaking on the strand its billows bright,
 As it reflects the moon's pure silver hue
 Which dyes it crystal from its mocking blue.
 And spread above, in all-voluptuous sight,
 The dazzling planets radiate the night—
 Those glow-worms on the ether highway hung
 To light the soul by gloomy doubt unstrung,
 And marshal it in vivid faith beyond
 Th'interminable air, bid it despond
 Not, but to light it to an atmosphere
 In ultra space to find its lodgment there,
 And breathe to mortal pilgrims tales profound
 That *There*, where doth Infinity abound
 Of peace, awaits the Mecca of the soul !—
 Oh, wondrous beauty of the night, stars roll
 In servitude around thee—votaries

From which exemplar worship rise
To thine all-heavenly incandescent glow !
They seem the crystals animating snow.
Thy flood of holiest serenity
Intoxicates our rapturous gaze on thee !
Awed by thy silent voice omnipotent,
Vain mortals shrink with eyes upon thee bent,
For thine attractive magnet binds the sight
In charm, all-irresistible, of light !—

6.

As beautiful as night with all its stars,
And calm as heaven which earthly sound debars,
Lies Kula (like to Luna on the soft
And purpled bed of firmament aloft,
With gaze benign upon the world below)
And seeks in thought some secret things to know.
Dark were this nook without the island queen—
Her beauty and her power make all serene.
Where is her courtly retinue ? And where
Her statesmen minimising now her care ?
Are this rude cave, begirt with barren rocks ;
The flinty chair ; the billows' vulgar shocks ;
Her panoply of majesty ? She's queen
Of very nature, not of man's demesne.
The vespers of the evening cannot know
Profounder calm than this queen's soul doth show
In the all-glassy volume of her eye :
Nor hang the heavens beneath the cloudless sky
With halo more absorbing, pure, than this
Dusk mortal whom the midnight stars did kiss.
Creation's Architect—when He of old
Carved dazzling worlds from out chaotic mould,
And breathed eternal essence into man,
And held Infinity within His span—
Called from th'unfathomable ante-dark
The daylight's glorious and perpetual spark,
And fused in man a kindling element
To propagate the glory whence 'twas sent :

And e'en within the savage breast to-day
 Such light of Maker's handiwork doth play.
 'Tis the inexplicable virtue of
 This light, the attribute of holy love,
 Which doth affiliate all nature, each
 Created essence doth but mutual teach ;
 For air and ocean, flower, insect and
 Things animate and herb of every land
 Absorb each other's nature, and the doom
 E'en meted for the heavens and earth (the tomb
 Of final, deep, midnight oblivion)
 Shows on the dial—Time hath only one !
 They mix terrestrially together till
 Ends their strict season and death does distil
 Their animation, but man's soul will fly
 To mingle with its source celestially !
 All earth's intelligences blend with ours
 (Though our existence hath eternal hours
 Which we—sometimes with eagerness, but oft
 With awe—see diall'd on the sun aloft)
 In sympathy, though in respective spheres,
 That on its own decease mankind appears
 Dissolving ere its hour, yet *thus* it all
 Learns how to lift supremest Mystery's pall !
 Yea, mortal minds catch this contagion
 Of nothingness, and with all nature join
 In universal suffering—they sleep
 In lullèd wonderment, and up the steep
 Whose base is Earth and apex Heaven, they raise
 A Bethel stair and vainly through the maze
 Grope their dim mental way to view the doom
 Of man to be immortal past the tomb !

7.

Thus vie in majesty the heavens and earth,—
 The sky itself an ocean (with a birth
 Repeated by reflection in our own,
 As myriad glories thus on earth are thrown).
 And who can view its midnight's loveliness

And not from earth then wish to evanesce
To dwell in one of those bright starry isles
Whose very light our senses all beguiles ?
Fain would we merge in its celestial ray,
And turn our night on earth to heavenly day !
Our human thought resolved in things sublime,
Strips off the clogging clay before its time :
We find the key of Death's profundity,
Not in the grave, but, living, in the sky !
Thus heaven and earth in mutual whispers speak
Their mysteries—communion naught can break,—
And thus the air, asleep itself, doth grace
Serenely Kula's drowsy, royal face.

CANTO II. ♣

I.

FAR on the Eastern brink doth rise
A gentle glow—the fire-worm of the skies—
Which peeps across the airy universe
Of blue expansion, making thus diverse
The intermingling colours of the spray
The sleepless waves in revelry display.
The lamp of night, hung in the heavens high,
Burns dim and dull, and feebly lights the sky ;
Whilst all the stars begin to flicker low
As they exhaustion palpably doth show.—
Most hallowed streak of morn, so soft, so pure,
Which with such gentleness doth unimmure
The brilliant day, and light the holy beam
Of all-celestial glory, thou dost seem
Interpreting the soul's deep mystery
To us, and urge it thus to previous see
The beauty everlasting of its fate !
The soul, reposing in its vaulted state
Of dark, awakes as calm as summer's breath
From out its lethargy of impious death !
Yea, with the action, scarce discernible,
Of thine own resurrection beautiful,

Our higher self, in chastened majesty,
Awakes to Light in Realms beyond the Sky!

2.

More wide Aurora's rosy, fairy hand
Now opes the Eastern door : at her command
The morning with expanding light doth blush ;
And through the purpled gloom the blue doth gush :
But can it be the day-dawn's eye doth cast
Such lurid borders on the clouds ? As past
The air they rush their edged tint doth fade,
And they resume their former snowy shade :
The crimson, then, is unsubstantial, false,
And not the colour which from day-dawn falls.
Nay ; drop the eye from heaven—where all
Is beauteous—to the earth that doth enthrall
The vision by its e'er revolting sights,
And now behold the flame which thusly lights
The air with such incarnadine flambeau
(Which makes the clouds seem waves with bloody
flow)

And shoots a ruby lightning through the air,
Absorbing morning's crystal stealing there.
Expanding more is bright Aurora's eye,
But fearfully reflecting o'er the sky
The most unnative blaze born in the deep,
As though far madly up th'ethereal steep
A too amphibious Ætna breathed its fire
Exhaustless as each volume rises higher.
Dark is the furnace that exhales the fumes,
And smaller grows it as it now consumes—
The Phoenix burning in the blaze it lit !
'Tis gone—the kindling fabric now doth flit
From sight : the waters lap the lingering smoke
And all the wreckage from the ship doth choke.
God, what a furnace ! How much human fuel
Must feed the blaze ! A visionary hell !
The Babylonian crematorium
With its septennial heat and odium,

Ne'er burnt with madder, impious, fury than
 This doomed, ignited ship—the tomb of man !
 Diana sickens at the sight, and hies,
 In morn's suffusing light, beyond the skies :
 Perchance she faints from lingering memory
 Of her celestial temple formerly
 At Ephesus, which that vain thief of fame,
 Erostratus, gave to th'absorbing flame,
 Thus buying memory in posterity
 With base Iscariot's coin—impiety.
 E'en noble toilers up the steep of Fame
 Must roll the slippery stone (to find their name
 Upon its apex) with more cunning than
 Did Corinth's heaven-banished, royal man.
 Time shall suffuse us and our greatest name,
 And veil with dark oblivion all our fame !

3.

The morn a brighter sheen of silver wears,
 And now each wave a brilliant cargo bears
 Of dazzling lights bound for promiscuous shores—
 The moon for pilot, and the winds for oars.
 Behold, there is a wave which lonely hath
 A darkling crest along its liquid path :
 More near, upon its undulating breast,
 It bears its burden stranger than the rest.
 Perchance 'tis solitary wreckage from
 Th'engulfed and calcined ship — whilst, maybe,
 some
 Hath been conveyed unto another strand
 To echo chaos in a distant land.
 On, on and landward, is the object borne,
 And larger grows it, like the eye of morn.—
 Thus man upon the billows of earth's life,
 Floats blindfold on the surge of pain and strife
 Unto that *ne plus ultra*, nightly shore
 Of Death—the Stygian torrent crossed, no more
 He may return to whence he did embark ;
 For Charon's pilotage is sure and dark !

4.

A man ! Such is the object wafted on
 The buoyant spray and breeze's pinion,
 As wave on wave transports him nearer to
 Th'impeding shore and closer unto view.
 His arms, with frantic effort and in vain,
 Strive with the waves which with his grief disdain
 To sympathise, but in their liquid might
 They toy and sport with the all-powerless wight.
 A hovering albatross checks its wild wing
 And poises in the air as though to fling
 Its idle talons and its unwhet beak
 Upon the figure did he not bespeak
 The signs of life although ambiguous :
 Now it, with eye pervading, envious,
 Around th'expansive space of water and
 Of air (so infinite that we expand
 In soul while gazing on such magnitude
 Of waving wonder in its solitude
 Of majesty, and on the ether'd cope—
 That mortals' rainbow of immortal hope),
 Darts onward with the pinion of despair
 To glut within some new ethereal lair.
 Disdainful through the air it proudly dives
 Until the eye no sight of it derives—
 It melts in distant air till lost to sight
 (As Hope that soars on transient wing of might
 Too oft is lost unto our fevered quest—
 Dissolving into nought within our breast).

5.

The tide is up, with fury doth it break
 Upon the callous shore which it doth wreak
 Perpetual vengeance on, as though it were
 A captive striving in its fetters there
 To break the barrier of the penting shore
 (Like Lucifer's vain struggle evermore) :
 But useless is the frensied sea's assault
 On the fixed adamant ; the spumy salt

Doth glaze the rocks' exterior, and but laves
Their sun-burnt brows that mantle o'er the waves.
Those lofty rocks cast cold, eternal smiles
Upon the ocean's power though it piles
Its foamy mountains on their flinty heads,
And thundering awe around them constant sheds.
More potent, lasting, are these fetters than
The iron gyves which Persia's royal man
Threw o'er th'incorrigible waves in spleen
To subjugate their force to his, and wean
Them vainly into servitude to him ;
But Xerxes was too glad o'er them to swim
In base retreat from Greece's warlike shore
And ride the Hellespontic wave no more.

6.

Far up the sturdy rocks (those footstools small
Of God, the Architect of Nature all)
The curling wavelets mount in vying haste,
Like dolphins gambolling by mermaids chased.
Where now is he the live-wreck of my song—
He forced by mastering waves forlorn along ?
They have transported him not to the sight
Upon the slimy shore : perchance their might,
Tired in its wanton sport, buoy up no more
Upon their cradling crest the wretch for shore,
Though, like their bubbles, he were lightly borne
And left to waste upon the pebbly bourne :
Yea, sunk beneath the breakers he may be,
To swell the lore of the unfathomed sea.

7.

The tidal waves, exhausted in their strength,
Recede from leaping up the rocks at length :
Back, back into the mighty urn that holds
Commingling myriad waters, and enfolds
Vast mysteries and beauties unrevealed,
And treasures rich eternally concealed,—

Back to the place where old Deucalion lies
 Dejected, shrivelling, and now mortifies
 (Anticipative of the final doom
 Inhuming Nature in oblivion's tomb !).
 The torrid sun re-silvers now the spray—
 All nature speaks the triumph of the day.
 Far out on the expansive waste the gulls
 Mount on the air, whose supple wing annuls
 The force of wind and wave and fervid heat
 As through the spurting spray their course is fleet.
 The shore a concert is by choral throats,
 Whose music with the ebbing outward floats.
 The tide forsakes its wild, delirious bound—
 The giant element now sleeps profound.

CANTO III.

I.

'Tis moonrise, gently streaking midnight with
 A softened light, which throws a rosy wreath
 Around, like some soft-tempered lightning-flash
 Without its thunder of profaning clash,—
 Nay, nay ; it is delusion, and mine eyes,
 In their too centred vision and unwise,
 Create this rare nocturnal beauty, and
 Stare on a mirage in exotic land
 Which my seduced intelligence till now
 Thus exorcised beneath a cavern's brow.
 Yea, 'tis a cave—*the* cave—and Kula night,
 Or rather the soft beam diffusing light
 Within the dark and arching niche of rock
 Where mists of darkness in the daytime flock
 (So far incised hath nature made the earth).
 It would envelop now its sordid dearth
 Reclined not there the princess of the isle—
 Bright Luna in siesta for awhile.
 She bends her eye (the home of rarest light)
 Upon a prize she views with wonder quite,
 And shows it seeming fondness, whilst her heart

Redoubles palpitation : like a dart
Is her each anxious glance and loving look,
As if she'd read her fate within such book.
The prostrate form she nurses seems asleep
(Who'd from pre-heaven with her awake to weep ?)
And still and silently reposes, though
The suspirated heaving now doth show
That life inhabits yet the weakly breast.
Who is this stranger royally caressed ?

2.

He opes his eyes and faintly looks around,—
Now heaves a soothing sigh with force profound :
His blueish eyes now catch the ray of hers
And from its verbal look new hope infers.
“ What sight is this ? Where am I ? ” cries the youth,
Whose wakened eye doubts the surrounding truth.
“ Ah, there the sated waves recede on whose
Wild, savage breast I thought I did repose
Resigned to death, till now my sense awakes
And proves their victim thus their care forsakes :
Yet, as in some unfinished dream, I feel
My battered body rocking soft,—no wheel
Of water draws me mightily around,—
No thundering ocean's catacoustic sound !
All is so still, so peaceful (perfect state,
For thus in mind we sit at Heaven's Gate !).
But stay. Who—who art thou I brightly see
Like some subdued aurora circling me ?—
A rainbow which the day transfers to night ?—
A midnight with Heaven's Door ajar for light ?
I gaze upon thee and thou thus dost seem
A sister'd cloud which near the moon doth gleam.
How came I here—*here*, to be nursed by *thee* ?
All I remember is myself at sea,
Tost mercilessly by vindictive waves
(Those hecatombs and epitaphless graves !).
I saw the shore remotely stretch afar :
And, with my last glance fixed upon a star

(Perchance the candle of my soul to thee,
 Like that bright-guiding herald anciently
 Of the Chaldean shepherds worshipful),
 I slept, but now see things equivocal—
 A resurrected thing from death to be
 Where thou, lone Houri, breath'st serenity.
 Oh, say how I such lodgment did possess?—
 How earned thy savage but most soft caress? ”
 A joyous sparkle kindles Kula's eyes
 As, with a fresh embrace, she soft replies :
 “ Ah, Kula found thee on the shore alone ;
 She thought thee dead—thou wast as still as stone.
 She, some few moons ago, did likewise find
 A gull washed on the beach by wave and wind,
 And Kula warmed it—nursed it back to life :
 But *it* was most unkind and to much strife
 Of mind left Kula when it flew away
 With stronger wing and brighter eye one day :
 But *thou* must not leave Kula, pale-faced boy ! ”
 As though he were her one consummate joy,
 She presses him close to her dusky breast,
 But he some moments since hath sunk to rest,
 And, sleeping well, leaves her to end her tale
 And strictest vigils o'er him to detail.

CANTO IV.

I.

The evening sun is sinking 'neath the wave,
 And now a halo red breaks o'er his grave
 Of temporary brightness ; and the sea
 Itself (as though awed by such majesty
 Of death) does lapse in more harmonious calm,
 And—as was Saul by David with a psalm—
 The vesper-chanting bird which cleaves the spray,
 Seems each wild wave in quietude to lay.
 The sleepless tide rolls from the curling shore
 Whose caves lose now the ocean's echoed roar.

The heavens and foamy element beseem
Great Nature's hour of rest in twilight's gleam,
When past the jutting granite burst in view
Some dozen prows manned by the native crew.
Swift gliding through the weakening breakers, they
Touch now the beach where Kula doth betray
Her canopied retirement and repose—
That regal seat immune from worldly foes.
With wild halloes and wilder weapon'd arms,
The dusky islanders (with rude alarms
Untunefully struck on their conchs with spears)
Rush towards the royal nook, but she appears
Who royalises it. She proudly stands
Erect, and peace, obeisance, now commands ;
Whilst Cecil—he the blue-eyed Northern boy—
Awakes at the barbaric shouts of joy,
And crouches at the savage-tender side
(As Hercules with Omphale did hide).
Down fall the horde dismayed upon the ground,
And their mad whoops lapse in a reverent sound,—
Prostrate at but the lifting of a hand,
A host of men obey a maid's command !

2.

Palmyra's warlike princess, too, did hold
Few men against Aurelian of old ;
The lustre of Zenobia's eye inspired
Her warriors then with stubborn courage fired ;
Her valiant heart beat for their martial drum ;
Her sword, in flashing language, ordered : " Come ! "
Fast heaved her bosom (which an Ætna was
Of vengeance) with no craven pulsive pause
Before the myriad plumes of pomp and power
The Roman legions fluttered,—in that hour
She was the vivid herald of her own
True patriotism, and she proved her crown
Could sit as well and nobly on her arm
As on her head and add a worthier charm.
Through carnage she her bleeding self did press,
Nor quaked, but rushed unto a brief success.

At length the eagle's adamant beak
Held fast the graceful warrior ne'er to break
From Rome's hard-made imprisonment of her.
Yet, in captivity she did aver
That even then her soul was still as free
And smiled on Rome's divided victory—
Her great, all-fetterless and patriot-soul
Burst from her glutting foemen's vile control
(The awful and vehement cataract
That leaps and plunges o'er the rocky tract
Whose loftiness doth arch the deep abyss,
Descends its course declivitous,
But still dies mighty even in its fall,—
A splendid death, with thunder for a pall !).
She dwelt not in the cold, immuring stones,
Nor breathed betwixt two antithetic zones,—
The air which filled her still with healthier life,
Her soul respired in ether past the strife
Of Rome, in freedom's rich vitality,
And in such spirit's atmosphere did die !
So Boadicea, too, the Western queen,
Who, smarting 'neath the tyrant Roman's spleen,
Deemed it a venial crime once to rebel
'Gainst Rome and all its cruelty rebel :
But vain the struggle,—she who then did dare
As Britain's royal dove to fly the air
While th'eagle monarch's fatal pinion spread
His all-pervading pall o'er martial dead !
Yet she, the gentle British sovereign,
Taught Rome a noble lesson of disdain :
Her soul, too large in honour, glory too,
To be pent up her foe's mean captive, threw
Her cold encircling and pre-irons off,
And echoed awfully the Roman scoff !
Within the fatal drug her regal lips
Her spirit's great emancipation sips ;
And in the dregs she found the liquid key
Of Freedom's ebon door eternally !
Semiramis, the queenly warrior
Of Nineveh, did alternate red war

With pallid peace, and nobly at the siege
Of Bactra proved how that a tender liege
Can order, grasp and use the bloody sword.
Dove-fed, an eagle throned, she dove-like soared !
So, too, the warlike, fair Eurydice—
Embracing death before captivity :
And Victorina, who took single lead
('Gainst Gallienus) at Rome's armies' head :
And Thomyris, her army heading, slayed
Bold Cyrus' hosts and he himself dismayed :
Queen Artemisia, also, who surprised
Vain Xerxes by those feats few exercised.
Thus woman dies ; thus woman's heart can beat
With valour's pulse and patriotic heat ;
Thus, for her land and honour, march through gore
To Glory's sphere : proud man can do no more !

3.

Now to my theme and to my themic peace.
Soon Kula bids the civic tumult cease ;
And then, her real safety certain, all
The loyal horde on their own Baal call
To guard their loved and loving island queen.
She, to reply, advances on the scene,
Whilst Cecil, unremembering fear, doth lie
Less trembling 'neath fond Kula's guardian eye,
Which glimmers o'er him like a heaven-lit star
In midnight's ether, loving though afar.
She bids her eager warriors to harm
Not her new wonder ; and her jetty arm
Waves like a potent sceptre o'er the host,
But gently, like the palm-leaf o'er the coast.
She tells the tale of her discovery,
And of the white-cheeked boy's recovery
From sickness ; promises, when more restored,
A festive day for him and all the horde.
Their savage breasts all heaving with content,
Their gladdened eyes are backward once more bent
Upon the idle prow, and with a shout

(Whose echo wildly lingers still about
The fragrant foliage of the isle) they all
Depart on lightsome feet which quickly fall
With frantic step and with delirious flight :
They, in their prowls again, soon sail from sight.

4.

Again together seated in the cave,
Which now the sprinkling tidal spray doth lave
And strew its bubble-pearls near its approach,
To Kula Cecil doth his full tale broach :
How that, a phthisic invalid, he left
His British home (and with ambition reft
From his aspiring mind) to seek a more
Congenial air than blows on changeful Albion's shore.
He then descants on th'awful fiery wreck,
And how the world seemed dwindled to a speck
To his dilated, death-affronted eye,
And he, with hair-held soul, resigned to die,
But had awakened in a cavern's mouth,
Cured by barbaric art and nurse uncouth.
The eye of Kula glistens with a joy,
As to re-kindle with its fire the boy.
Now each recurring day heals him the more,
And blushes grow, like early rose-tints, o'er
His blanchèd cheeks : his languid eye is glassed
With growing lustre, and new health dost cast
A blooming brightness o'er his drooping mien.
His vigour fast returning, he doth lean
In thought towards home—at least to Britain's Isle,
For he hath lost, sad orphan, his erstwhile
Parental home, so claims one simply liberal.
Thus Britain is to him, like patriots all,
A home—the magnet of the roving soul,
Which all its worldly courses doth control.
In hope, oft doubt, he watches for a mast
Of some benignant ship to pass at last
And be his dear conveyance back to home—
That harbour of the heart to which we roam !

5.

The sun, dejected, droops along the wave,
And sinks to rest within his glorious cave ;
The day, in kindred sympathy, declines
And on the greyish verge of night reclines :
All nature, wooed by some most heavenly love,
Seems hushed in essence hallowed from Above ;
And Luna, quitting her Ephesian dome
To welcome in the night, doth faintly come,
As Cecil lonely (save with thoughts—those mates
Whose constancy no spite obliterates,—
Those counsellors of nature, faithful, fond,
And 'twixt man and his destiny the bond,—
The beacons of the mind to light its course
O'er life's deep-twilight way with beaming force,—
They sit like heralds of futurity
Upon our brow, the vestals of mind's eye)
Strolls now along the tide-abandoned beach,
And as his eye sweeps far as it can reach
Athwart the heaving element, a sigh
Steals through his lips—the heart's voice, though not
high,
Thus audibly its feelings murmuring,
And its deep passion palpably doth fling.
He pauses, raises up his eyes unto
The sky, but the all-molten tropic blue
Strikes with its sunny basilisk his glance
Back to the morbid earth where brilliance
Omnipotent—less awful, but as true
And beautiful—doth dazzlingly imbue
With light the crystal of each liquid work.
The boy, as though the thought which just did lurk
Within him now had vanished, turns again
And, contemplative still, walks onward, when
The royal maid, from near a jutting rock,
Confronts his gaze with a delightful shock.
Her eye of jet emits its fire anew
And freshly kindles his of fairer blue—
Like midnight throwing her black mantle o'er

The purple vault, that all its starry lore
Reveals true heavenly poetry of light ;
Or as th'impenetrable womb of night
Gives birth celestial to Aurora's fire.
Through Kula's raven hue doth oft aspire
Her sun-born blood unto her tropic neck—
As August's sunset, dwindling to a speck,
Diffuses crimson o'er the darkening wave ;
Or coral burning through such darkling wave.
She takes his hand in hers of sombre hue
(Whose touch doth Cecil's northern blood imbue
With new-created life) and with a smile
Persuades the timid youth to still beguile
His leisure by reclining in the cave
Where love shall still protect him from the wave.
He raises now his wandering eyes to hers
And from their voiceless answer he infers
That love lies deeply there—itself the wave
To bear his barque of happiness and save
(What rhetoric doth glaze a beauty's eye,
Whose lightning power can bid man live or die !).
Fond Kula entertains the youth with talk,
Who, guided by sweet influence, doth walk
Where she so oft before hath subtly led ;
'Tis quite enough for him that she doth shed
Benignant virtue o'er his spirits all,
Which softest magnet from his heart doth call
His own yet infant and responsive love.
Yea, his awakening, purest passion of
Affection meets its wooing counterpart,
And mutual feeling couples heart to heart—
As ivy tendrils growing to the tree
In native freedom cling, sole mates to be.
'Tis this profoundly-growing passion which
Calls up his former soul (as Endor's witch
Raised up to Saul's repenting eye
Old Samuel's buried sprite familiarly)
Which breathes to him sweet memory of his home,
And throws a mental bridge across the foam
Which takes him once again to childhood's sphere—

That all-congenial spot. A friendly tear,
In crystal sympathy, shines on his cheek
Whose fervid trickle seems to almost speak.
His heart in its affection cloven is—
Two essences contend to give him bliss :
He longs to tread the land which gave him birth
(The mind's oasis on a desert-earth) ;
And, oh, th'unstifling, warmest passion of
Deep gratitude's affection woos his love
Now backwards to the savage at his side
(*Caste's* savage, for her nature doth decide
Her gentlest attributes and noblest soul)
Who, as the magnet doth the point control
In quivering bondage, subtly charms his love
And forceless draws his heart (as Noah's dove,
By tender instinct, made its newer nest
In storm-bequeathèd verdure, there to rest)
Unto her own of such Vesuvian beat.
The care wherewith kind Kula now doth greet
The mutual-feeling Cecil wildly rolls
Like lava o'er him—firing two young souls
With torrid and responsive flame of love
(Which, haply, like *Alceste*, she could prove).

6.

On—sweetly on—absorbed they walk along
The silent beach, for now the mermaid's song
Hath (like the hum-bird's vesper) ceased, as eve
Marks their soft cadence, and the day doth grieve
Itself away, rocked on the twilight's breast ;
Whilst yet the tide sleeps out its moaning rest.
The moon, with her pure alchemy of light,
Transmutes now slowly heaven's azure bright
Into her own of all-celestial glow
(As *Juno's* spot of milk suffused in snow
The blue which marked the lily's primal bloom).
Like *Polydorus'* myrtle o'er his tomb,
The sun sheds crimson drops along the sea,
As he declines in all serenity.
The happy pair (though Cecil's mind doth lack

Its full contentment as it hovers back
Oft to his own old homestead past the main,
Where for the moment he dwells child again)
Hath now approached the soft barbarian's cave,
When, lo, to Cecil's eye, across the wave
A sail appears and grows with fluttering haste.
The quickly-fevered youth feels that the waste
Of water stretched before his re-born eyes
Doth cause a sweet oasis to arise.
With his dilating eye the ship expands,
And Cecil wildly signals with his hands
As too unconsciously he breaks away
From Kula whom he dares to disobey
Though love, and not her sceptre, doth command
(Yet, is not love, within the meanest hand,
The sceptre's sceptre ; and the diadem
Of princes less than love's inherent gem ?).
Now near and nearer floats the spreading sail,
Whilst Cecil's palpitating breast doth fail
To meet in memory still of his dark mate
Whose heart doth quickly flutter and dilate
With wonder mingled with instinctive fear
That her white boy will sail. A little tear
Starts from the ruby corner of her eye,
The opal circle glassing brilliantly.
Her bosom quickly heaves—like two small hills
Of glossy jet which love's hot Ætna fills
With all ebullience of native fire.
The youth's home-fever rages now the higher
As nigh the shore the plainer ship appears
To Cecil's burning gaze through joyful tears :
But see, 'tis now within his vocal hail.
He hastens towards the tide, but quite doth fail
To quit the clasp the royal arms have thrown
Around his agitated frame—his own
Are dropt unto his side as in her eye
(That melting lexicon all-heavenly)
He finds the magnet of his truant soul :
'Neath such celestial charm all his control
Of self doth merge in sweetest dreamland love—

As Noah's fever ceased, to see his dove.
(What heavenly moments sparkle in the eyes
Of lovers, and what visions thence arise !
Like Chaldees peopling stars with worlds, the eye
Of lovers is an orb where they descry
Intelligences' shapes all as divine,
And where their future paradise doth shine !).
The boy, with self and self contending, breaks
One fettered arm away, whilst Kula quakes
With love-inspired terror at the doom
Which breathes around (as at the holy tomb
The Magdalene gazed tremblingly upon
The awful vault whose silence whispered : " Gone ! ").
Responsive to the boy's excited call,
The vessel anchors, and doth now let fall
A boat, which dances to the shore as light
And ominous as each fine foot (the night
Before red Waterloo) at Brussels' ball
Fair Richmond's Duchess heedlessly did call.
Close to the bubble-breaking shore the boat
Is now drawn up, whilst Kula's eye doth float,
More swift than eagle's pinion, o'er the scene,
And with her intercepting form doth screen
The doubtful boy from vision of the crew—
As interposing night obscures the view
By ruder earth of heaven's brightest sky ;
Or beauty's veil that blinds her lover's eye.
Fast, fast and faster beats poor Kula's heart
'Gainst Cecil's frantic, loving counterpart.
The tender beating of her own doth rock
His slowly unto rest—the contra shock
Of seeing his old homeland ne'er again,
Subsides unwillingly (like tide-waves when
Declining in their fury, they recede
With spiteful blows on strands that then succeed).
The sailors beckon,—Cecil hesitates
At two cross-roads of his momentous fates :
Far past the desert of the tossing foam
His eye beholds the mirage of his home ;
And all the old sweet hours of happiness

Rush through his mind, which he can not suppress.
“ My refuge, Britain, and my home of peace,
Though torn from thee, my love shall never cease
For boyhood’s spot so hallowed by thy name !
On foreign soil my heart shall beat the same,
Oh, give me back the happy days again
Which brightly did mine infant life sustain !
Restore the lost ambition of my mind,—
In thee my resurrected hopes I’d find.
I come to thee,—the prodigal returns,—
Lost, found, my heart for thee my guardian years !—
Farewell, rude isle : I’ll note thee, also thy
Great kindness which refused to let me die :
For such I leave some lingering love behind,
And gratitude shall float on every wind !
Once more farewell——,” here Kula, with a cry,
Falls to the ground. “ By Heaven, thou must not die ! ”,
Adds Cecil, with new terror, whilst he lifts
Up Kula as the boat the nearer drifts.
He sees, with joy, the dusky girl survives.
“ Thank God,” he cries, “ ’twas but a swoon, she lives !
Go—go,—my heart and soul are sober’d now,
And view mine only love beneath this brow,
Ye mariners ! I thank ye much, but it
Must be to *you and Britain* whom more fit
I breathe my long farewell ; for my one love
And home are *here* ! ” He sees the boat doth move
Back out to sea and soon is lost to sight
(For darkness comes), and from this fateful night
The youth and Kula join their hands and fate.
He leads her to the cave, and both have sate
Till weariness and talk lull them to sleep.
Perchance they dream of no more tears to weep.

ACHILLES' LAMENT OVER THE BODY OF PENTHESILEA.

PROUD Troja—sepulchre of men
Who wrote thine annals with their sword,
And by deep indent of such pen
Time cannot blot one glorious word,—
A woman's beauty conquered thee
And wrecked thy royal citadel :
A woman's beauty cunningly
Drew tears whence none were deemed could dwell !—
Why, woman, was thy sex evolved ?
Why still of Eden make a hell ?
Why serpent's fang in thee resolved ?
Why life's chameleon ? Canst thou tell ?
Uncertain is thy heart, thy word :
All-treacherous thy Gorgon eye.
Still, thanks to God, thy voice is heard,
With eye bent o'er us, when we die !—

“ Oh, have I slain thee, valiant queen ?
Wrecked thus thy nature's store of bloom,
And shivered beauty's glass serene ?
My tears shall raise flowers o'er thy tomb,
Whose perfume shall as incense be
Ascending to the skyish shrine
To mingle with the purity
Celestials wear combined with thine !
I did not think that Death could leave
Such lovely ruins from his shock ;
Or that the darkest night would leave
Such an aurora, which doth mock
And daze the neighbour-starry lights.
Nor did I deem old Death could paint,

With his black colours mixed in nights,
Perfection thus without a taint.
Ere my too warlike hand did strike
Thee down, I saw *one* pattern of
Thy fairness, but, alas, now—like
A broken mirror which I love—
I view thy beauty multiplied
Within the fragments at my feet !
Oh, *I* have shivered it ! I'd hide
These tears but that I deem them meet :
Thy passing beauty, wrecked by me,
Exhales that watery grief of soul
Which till to-day no eye did see.
If Æthon e'en could not control
Emotion at his master's death
But shed some tears o'er Pallas' corse,
I'd lack a soul a horse thus hath,
And show a nature lower, worse !
I'll not be shamed by a rude beast,
Nor will despise the tear divine :
Man can be god by this at least,
For then his higher self doth shine !
Mine own swift steed, true Xanthus, too,
Would find a voice again to chide
Mine iron nature, did I view
Such ruins fair, without such tide.
I fain would break, or throw away,
This hungry weapon that did cleave
Great valour, beauty, thus to-day,
Did still thy snowy bosom's heave,—
Did close thy tender eyelids o'er
Their sparkling lights (like pearly clouds
Which fold two stars to shine no more,
Or as the night the day enshrouds),—
I fain would do this happily,
But that my country's fate it holds :
I could not see her wrecked like thee,
Her beauty wrapt in Ruin's folds !
Sleep, royal Amazon and brave,
Serenely in thy wakeless sleep !

I cannot now thy fair life save,
But, oh, pure crystals I can weep !
Hark ! There's the signal calling me
To battle : but why thou hast slept
So idly, *I* will speak for thee,
And Greece shall know Achilles wept ! ”

•



PYRAMUS AND THISBE.

CANTO I.

I.

THOU mighty Babylon, which art no more—
Extinct, decayed, forgotten and untraced,
Like to a giant's glory lost and o'er ;
A gladiator now by Time effaced,—
Can thy cemented walls of bitumen,
Which soared so lustily up to the sky
With wings ethereal, ne'er be seen again,
Nor thy pervading crest, by human eye ?
Thy hundred brazen gates, vast city, swing
Not now upon the hinges of thine awe,
For, molten by Time's alchemy, they fling
But dismal echoes of chaotic law.
Thou Tullia in thy monument of power,
With lamp of glory burning brilliantly,
Time's touch hath made thee ashes ere thine hour,
And quenched thy lustrous blaze perpetually.
Antæus left a skeleton within
His grave elongated ; but where, oh, where,
Gigantic city, hath *thy* burial been,
And where thy ruins now ? Coffin'd in air ?

2.

The myriad lamps blaze brightly forth to-night,
And brilliant is the festive, joyous scene :
With sparkling wit, the throng is no less bright :
Th'aerial feet of dancers trained have been :
Voluptuous music charms the sordid air :
Mirth and wild revelry join hand in hand

To banish thought and sorrow, woe and care,—
Assyria's capital doth joy command.
The cup is raised again unto the lip,
And healths to Belus and to Ninus are
Now to be drunk with a delirious sip,—
Astarte ! Hark ! Is that the sound of war ?
Dash down the cup,—let laughter change its note
To one of chivalrous command to fight,—
Stop, stop the dance ; let each wild, fairy foot
Take Syria's beauty hence—there's blood to-night !
The golden vessels brim with liquid now
More red than their erst wanton beverage :
The candelabras' brilliance flickers low—
Their oil burns out with Babylon's last age !
Euphrates' mighty stream doth change to blood
As its new current fills the former's bed,
Reflecting proud Assyria's wanton brood
In crimson glass—the mirror of the dead !
Reel not, ye nobles, surfeited with wine ;
The Persians' feet are steady, counting yours :
Grasp firm the sword, not let your fingers twine
So loose around it,—Cyrus is the hours
Of Babylon fast dialling upon
Thy destiny with his incisive sword :
Yea, Persia by surprise hath thee undone,
And left thy glory but an echoed word !—

3.

Thou chaos, mausoleum of the air,
What affluence of earth and majesty
Of nature shrivel to thy fatal care—
Thy dome the grave of all eternally !
When HE from out thy grossest mould did carve
This all-majestic sphere in ancient time,
HE doomed intelligences not to starve
In post-extinction, but, as thing sublime,
Man's godhead Principle alone should thee
Confound, and see *thy* ruins all decayed,

Whilst else created elements should be
 Resolved to thee again, and all should fade
 And dwindle back to thy vast nothingness !
 Yea, thou shalt be the sepulchre for all
 Terrestrial and celestial loveliness—
 The tomb beyond th'archangel's kindling call !
 But let the sun on earth for ever set ;
 The moon wax dimmest in perpetual night ;
 The myriad starry worlds like fragment jet
 Fall tottering, the *soul* shall take its flight
 On wings eternal and soar far beyond
 The wreckage of each universal ball,
 Nor cast one backward glance, but scorn the bond
 Of clay that cooped her precious self—her all !

CANTO II.

I.

“ I only hear thy music-voice,
 My Thisbe, like an echo from
 Some distant lyre ; yet, I rejoice
 That, faithful, thou dost hither come
 To bless mine ears with thy dear tale
 Of constant love returned for mine.
 Like to the stars that never fail
 In heaven to love and mutual shine
 In faithful fellowship each pair,
 Our loves a sweet communion have
 And twinkle with a light from there.
 Still, Thisbe, I would further crave
 To meet thee once more face to face,
 To gaze within thy sky-lit eye
 And in its azure volume trace
 My one eternal destiny ! ”
 Thus speaks the youthful Pyramus
 To Thisbe beautiful and pure—
 Those Babylonians emulous
 In mutual love so deep and sure.

Cold is the wall indeed which parts
Warm lovers thus ; but through its chink
As closely meet their molten hearts—
Each whisper is love's strongest link.
More cold their parents' hearts that can
Not feel for love's impassioned throe
In these young breasts, but place a ban
On them—an avalanche of snow.
Ah, tender passion, thou'rt divine,
For thy sweet fate is not to be
Slave to man's law, or to combine
Thy force with his mortality !

2.

“ Oh, could I tell
To thee, my love,
What deep doth dwell
(Not once to move)
Within my heart,
New bliss I'd feel,
And love's sweet art
Would all reveal !
But thou dost know
My love for thee
Hath dateless flow.
The moments be
All brief until
Our eyes next meet
And hearts' dear will
Be all complete !
I sit and gaze
The livelong night
On each star's blaze,
That by the sight
I dream that thou
Art that same spark
Which on my brow
Through all the dark

Sheds cheering light
 And dew benign :
 And, oh, as bright
 Still let it shine !
 Our Chaldees say
 A world lies in
 Such starry ray,
 Peopled within
 By beings bright :
 But, dear, thou art
 The *one* orb'd light
 To my lone heart,
 And the *sole* sense
 Engendering
 Hearts' recompense—
 Love's fledgling wing.
 I've lonely sat
 All through the night
 And watched till that
 The purpled light
 With all its orbs
 Have dwindled to
 Day that absorbs
 It in its blue ;
 But yet, oh yet,
 My *heart* describes
 In night of jet
 Beneath love's skies
 A *deathless* star
 Of fadeless hue
 Though yet afar—
 Dear love, 'tis you ! ”
 This Phlegethon
 Of passion moves
 The tale undone
 Which Thisbe loves
 To oft recite
 To him who is
 As herself quite—
 Wed by a kiss !

3.

“ 'Tis said that flowers their incense throw
In perfume to the starry shrine :
As *thy* true star, my Thisbe, know
Love's incense breathed by thee is mine.
Burn thou thy watch-fire, vestal dear,
Within the temple of my heart,
That love's soft, hallowed flame appear
To our twin souls a lamp impart
Which lights them to Elysium.
Say, Thisbe, can we break away
To meet again ? Canst thou not come
And let me see thee e'en this day ?
I'll meet thee in the present hour
Beside the tomb of Ninus, where
Thou first receiv'dst mine emblem flower
Of purest love and which didst wear
Within thy bosom's warmest snow,
Which vies in chastest whiteness with
The virgin light which lilies throw
(Their petals o'er thy figure wreath).
Art thou agreed, my Thisbe sweet,
To meet me so within this hour ?
I'll wait there till we mutual greet,
Free from these walls' ungenial power.”

4.

“ Oh, do not ask,
My Pyramus,
My loving task !
Thou knowest thus
I simply prove,
By meeting you
My dearest love
And passion true.
Ah, yea I will
Be with you when

Thou say'st. Until
 Then, I'll again
 Bid thou be true
 And meet me there.
 Dear love, adieu.
 Quick I'll repair
 To Ninus' tomb
 And will meet thee
 Where there doth bloom
 The mulberry."

CANTO III.

I.

The evening shadows steal across the sky
 And throws a greyish light around : the moon
 Already from her couch doth slowly hie,
 Prolonging twilight dying all too soon ;
 And the Hesperian lamp doth heavenly add
 His lustre to the vespers of the scene,
 As love's sweet trysting monument is clad
 In marbled whiteness hallowed and serene
 By the sepulchral awe pervading it ;
 And the white blossoms drooping o'er the tomb
 Seem snowflakes stationary which doth sit
 As heralds of the soul in death's vast gloom.
 Now, like some earthly moonbeam through the night,
 Or like the sybil of the sacred spot—
 The heavenly Magdalene to catch first sight
 Of HIM she loved—a fairy form hath shot
 To view, and rests beside the marbled mound,
 Reposing, with a zephyr-breathèd sigh,
 At its cold base, and glances all around,
 Then negligently throws her light veil by.
 But that her bosom heaves, in nature's grace,
 And her luxuriant-tressèd head doth turn
 On air's light pivot and with anxious face
 Darts glances oft, 'twould seem that Ninus' urn
 Had Psyche for his sculptured company ;
 Or Iris lingering in petrescent love

Ere with his soul to heaven she doth fly ;
Or like a lone Nereide who rove
Far from her crystal cave, now frozen here ;
Or Niphe, wandering from Diana's care,
Lost thus in solitude to now adhere
Her iced, all-snowy form, to granite bare ;
Or humble Merope, still tired of heaven,
And making her earth's exile thus in stone.
As vital warmth by Venus once was given
Unto the chisell'd form Pygmalion
In wooing marble carved and loved and wived,
This human statue, formed by seraph's hand
From heaven's Pentelic stone, hath now revived
And, starting up, she takes her loving stand.
What horror now distends her lightning eye,
And makes her modell'd form all tremble fast
(More than the blossoms of the mulberry
By fairy touches of eve's zephyr-blast) ?
What, too, doth cause her agitated scream,
And fever'd heaving of her pearly breast ?
As Luna shoots behind a cloudy beam
And is suffused in night's all-ebon cast,
The frightened Thisbe—for 'tis she who hath
Been sentinel at this lone sepulchre
Ere Pyramus arrives—flees from the wrath
Two glaring, awe-revolving lights on her
A lioness too suddenly bestows :
Gone quickly from the threatening spot, the maid
Is lost to view—as a bright spirit goes
Swift glimmering through our dreams all-holy made !

2.

The royal princess of the beasts—as though
She found her feast in sight of beauty, and
Could glut on carnal prey no more—doth go
And (still intoxicated by her stand
To gaze on Thisbe who the awful awed)
With baffled fury tears the victim-veil,
And dyes it with her own fang-dropping blood—
Perchance the relic of some prey as frail.

The rugged passion ceasing (as the fire
 Exhausts itself in violence of act ;
 And as the tide, aweary, doth retire
 In calm dejection ; and the cataract
 From its majestic terror lowly falls ;
 The hellish Ætna's termagantic rage,
 Which foams with lava-spite in awful balls,
 Whose mighty fever faintness doth assuage)
 The beast, first thundering a moan, doth turn,
 And, glaring at the artificial prey
 (Whose multi-remnants decorate the urn)
 Disgusted and unsated slinks away.

3.

Anon the love-Vesuvian Pyramus
 Arrives in sweet affection's haste upon
 The trysting spot all too ambiguous
 In loneliness, in blood, in hope foregone :
 But casting his dilating eye where lies
 The gory veil in shredded texture now,
 The wild youth towards it, like Euphemus, flies,
 And pallor robs the rose-tints from his brow
 As he the silent oracle doth read
 With too precipitate and fearful eye.
 " Great Belus, god of Babylon, she's dead !
 My Thisbe by some preying beasts did die
 Ere my too tardy feet could bring me here
 To save the dove from yielding brutish feast !
 Oh, Thisbe, Thisbe, thou who wast so dear,
 I could not save thee from the angry beast !
 But yet I feel that thy bright spirit floats
 In its all-lovely and all-sacred form
 Above my head, which placidly denotes
 Thou'rt me awaiting past th'ethereal storm !
 Sit—and for ever sit—my Psyche, thus
 Upon the bosom of the circling air,
 And be the pilot of thy Pyramus
 To that sweet bliss of thine own god-like care !
 Oh, while I linger now on this dull earth,
 Companionless, in sorrow, I but feel

I've lost my life's one consummating worth—
The jewel gone such casket did conceal !
Like a lost pilgrim on the Stygian shore,
Who scans the ebon of perpetual night
In vain for one heaven-kindled star, far o'er
My firmament of being now my sight
Takes such a pilgrimage to thee discern !
Without thee life itself is idle, and
The earth a Libyan waste, which I must spurn
To be made happy : so in thy blest land,
Thou nymph (invisible save to thy kin
Celestial spirits) I must hasten to
Come where thou anxious art, and to begin
That loving tale which will eterne be new !—
Come forth, my sword, and point me to my fate,
Far, far beyond this likewise mortal earth !—
My Thisbe (mine in sure eternal state),
Exult thou in thine old and brightest mirth,
For I thus join thy hovering spirit now,
And all the gods waft us to our joint rest ! ”
Thus saying, he deals now the fatal blow
At his resignful, too impassioned breast,
And, stretched upon th'already carmine ground,
His soul takes flight across th'eternal waste
Beyond, to seek its love not to be found,—
As th'ancient dove on wing of hope did haste
O'er universal chaos and the tomb
Of earth, to find her habitative rest,
But unto disappointment to succumb ;
All vain was, too, that pilgrim's airy quest !

4.

The fever of her fear abated, now
The faithful Thisbe timidly doth come
To keep that tryst which she to *Death* did vow,
Unknown, to keep here at this Gorgon-tomb !
The azure of her sparkling, heavenly eye
Gleams with a newer, fiery, horrid fear—
As did that optic's blueish mould, the sky
Itself, to see Phaethon hold the gear

Of Phœbus' steeds, diffusing death around,—

When doubtfully she views the love-wreck spread
Before her feet. No word, no whisper, sound,

Escapes her quivering lips as on the dead
She drops her eloquent, all-dewy gaze—

Those rose-lips which a moment's autumn robbed
Of bloom's vermilion. Bubbling tears now daze

Her sight. When this Nile's sympathy hath throbb'd
Its bosom-fountain dry, the lonely girl

Lifts up her head and glances into heaven
(Wherein, like Berenice's, her each curl

Will as a constellation bright be given)
As though to get an oracle direct

From all the gods in tender synod there.
Her arms of alabaster intersect

Themselves upon her snowy breast in prayer ;
And, oh, the melting rhetoric within

Her all-angelic eye must surely plead,

And all her prayer's requests for her thus win,

And make the stars her lamps of hope indeed !
Her silent orison, and so profound,

Now finished in such loving awe, the maid
Drops her determin'd gaze—without a sound—

On Pyramus's wreck which death hath made.
She snatches up the reeking blade of his,

And, gently raising up his eye-closed head,
Now on his lips leaves an eternal kiss

(Which weds their souls in nuptials of the dead)
Then boldly plants the too obedient point

Within her most responsive, loving breast,
And dies to live in deathless union joint,

And hold their wedding in perpetual rest !
Th'ethereal night on earth hath also come,

But silver'd by the light the moon hath sent
(The shroud these victims wear in roofless tomb)

Bequeathing love an awful monument !
The mulberry of white fruit, dangling o'er

That triple sepulchre, records the deed
On post-historic page, and red e'ermore

Dyes its fair juice, which ne'er shall cease to bleed !

KAZUI.

I.

CALM rolls the small Bosphorean wave,
Byzantium's rock to woo and lave,
And soft the breezes wafting it
As o'er its crest they lightly flit
With fairy-like, Euphemian speed,
And bright as Phœbus' favourite steed.
Like the coy, artless dimple in
The softness of Love's tender chin,
The water's undulating smile
The gazer charms and doth beguile.
How far—how oft—how vainly we
Pursue the charm we idly see !
Nor in th'intemperance of love
Behold the dangers as we rove :
On—on we chase the beauteous fly
Whose wing, to our immiraged eye,
Hath all the hues the rainbow burns,
And all the tints which sunset urns :
It wears to our enchanted gaze,
Sublimier paint than heaven's blaze
Of azured morn or purpled night :
It seems to be a spirit bright
Betwixt our gaze and holy land :
A sparkle on some golden strand.
It is the rainbow of our hopes—
The star of gloomy misanthropes.
E'en Iris in rich virtues ne'er
So heavenly rested on the air
As beauty on the lover's breast—
The mortal heaven for her to rest.
The dawn with its voluptuous glow

No more a paradise doth show
 Of poetry the most divine
 Than true love's birth when it doth shine :
 'Tis then we merge all-helplessly
 Within that soul glassed in her eye ;
 Forgetting our mortality,
 And that a mirage we but see ;
 Remembering not that we must die,
 But make it our eternity.
 We build our local heaven with
 Its solitary star—a wreath
 Of tinsel glory for our brow,
 Which melts like spring's exotic snow.
 Bright Berenice's silken crown
 All-starrily is seldom thrown
 Around fair beauty's head of clay
 To lend the faintest heavenly ray.
 We watch the lark with plumage soft
 Soar musically far aloft
 Till from our wounded vision she
 In the blue space doth traceless flee :
 So many a time may we descry
 Love's pinion fade within our sky.

2.

Stamboul, no more thy godlike minds
 Diffuse on the quadruple winds
 Mankind's intelligences all,
 To lift earth's ignorance's pall—
 Like fair Aurora lifting night
 To grace the world with heavenly light.
 Thou *Roma Nova* once so great,
 Magnificent, the living seat
 Of wisdom, and the Mecca to
 All minds who would lore's knowledge view :
 Yea, thou which wast a vivid book
 For the young world to take a look
 And, reading its celestial page,
 Be deified into a sage ;
 Rome's capital of Eastern power

(Th'imperial flourish of an hour),—
Now glorious star gone sparkling through
Our mortal dream and lost to view.
The actual worm that crawls in ease
And through its slimy course doth squeeze
Is even nobler in its fate
Than thou in thine, for its estate
Of foul existence from its birth
Hath been but from the lowly earth
To seek new life on its decay,
As sun but slumbers till next day,—
Within its sordid death it finds
New suction which both phases binds
In intermittent, constant state,
Nor loans one smile from sceptred Fate :
But thou, of nobler essence, say,
Proud city, where, oh, where doth lay
Thy resurrected self—or where
Thy heredity—where thine heir ?
Alas, no chrysalistic state
Is thine—beneath the tomb of Fate
That sexton Time hath buried thee,
And scarce thine epitaph we see :
Thy shrine of wisdom is no more :
Thy book is closed with lettered lore :
Thy power is ashes which have not
Burned to new life (thy shrivelling lot
Is meaner than the Phœnix' doom,
Which navels new wings in its tomb) :
Thy day hath waned, thy sun hath set,
Thy night is moonless—airy jet—
And e'en thy final star is gone,
Thy last bright echo, and thou'rt lone !

3.

Scarce is the breath upon that wave—
It hath the halo of the grave—
And tremblingly it spreads its spray
Along the pebbles thus at play.

The vesper birds their final song
Leave Echo briefly to prolong.
The dying sun of molten gold
Sinks in his chrysalistic fold.
The evening star in tremor gleams
And heaven's earliest mirror seems,—
The lantern of the glow-worm meek
To worship it doth humbly seek
(And blest is he who hath a star
Of joy in heaven though afar,
And on the gloomy earth a light,
For, though a worm's, 'twill break the night !).
Far more serene the grotto is
Which Love marks out for passion's bliss
(That architect whose infant hand,
Though chiselless, can yet command
The moulding of a palace bright
In Libyan wastes, and check the night).
Beneath a bower where myrtle twines,
And lilac with the eve combines
To give it fragrant solitude
Where stranger's foot may ne'er intrude
(Though near her father Hassan's house,
But yet too far to hear love's vows)
Reclines Kazui, deep in thought.
Her cheek the evening's chill hath caught,
For it is pale—the snowdrop like,
Whose life doth through its pallor strike :
But, oh, her eye is animate,
For there a basilisk hath sate !
Its immaterial flame is an
Enkindling spark Vesuvian,
And swims a star in darkest night—
Sole heavenly twin of worldly light :
Yea, lustrous more her orbs of jet
Than moon's reflex in rivulet :
A Gorgon sits within its fire
Who wounds the gaze by her soft ire :
More blaze than pale Discordia's eye
Kazui's wears celestially.

Her airy vesture is so light
It seems a moonlit cloud at night.
Her bosom half is bared to heaven—
The dove's unfurling worship given,
Whose spotless wing is purity,—
Or as chaste snow upheavingly
Uneasy in its lodgment with
Mortality upon the earth,
Looks purely back to its own sky
For sympathy—too heavenly
Its essence to conjoin with clay,
And with the dust to melt away.
Her head with satin fibres dark,
Rests on her arm with beauty stark—
As marble of Marpessus glows
More fair when near to earth it shows.
Impatience is glazed in her eye
Now brightly bold, now sadly shy,
And, like a meteor through the air,
The lightning of its hopeful stare
Gleams o'er the scene with sparkling haste :
Thus Venus' evening-star, less chaste,
Doth tremble on the vesper verge—
Lighthouse o'er Time's eternal surge.
Kazui, when a little sigh
Relieves the languor of her eye,
And sets the rose-tint wave at rest
Which made an ocean of her breast,
Forsakes her couch, and with a grace
Apelles' brush could never trace
As new Anadyomene—
The model moves too cunningly.
Her feet, like flakes of glistening snow
Heaven-dropt upon the earth below,
Glide to the opening of her grot,
And with her hand—which trembles not
From fear, but fever'd hopefulness—
She gently doth the foliage press
And through the breeze-fanned leaves she seeks
Him who her passion mutual speaks.

“ He cometh not, the hour grows late,”
 She murmurs, as the wicket-gate
 She sees still idle on its hinge.
 A little hectic rose doth tinge
 Her lily cheek as now she hears
 An unstrange step which lulls her fears.

4.

“ Kazui ! ” late Loreo gasps,
 As he the girl responsive clasps.
 “ Forgive my tardiness, dear heart,
 But ’twas the wind-drunk wave did part
 Us twain so long ; my boat was stayed
 By foamy spite, which hath delayed
 My sweetest transit unto thee.
 ’Tis not the wind, or savage sea,
 Or rocks of wildest awe and force,
 Or aught from terror’s sternest source,
 Which can or shall divide us long :
 Thy father’s faith and vow are strong,
 Kazui ; nor must we forget
 Though one we are divided yet.
 The cross I carry of my creed
 Is not thy father’s pious need :
 My Bible and his Koran ope
 On variant Texts of Spirit-hope.
 The faith my mother early taught
 In my Venetian home hath bought
 My pious peace, but love’s regret.
 Oh, fairest Moslem, do thou yet
 Believe for both there truly wait
 Blest Houris at th’Eternal Gate,
 Though thou be proselyte to me
 And I in creed the same to thee !
 Love—that development of Him
 Which kindled light from chaos dim—
 Shall shrive our hearts, our souls, our all,
 Though both on stranger Heavens call !

Through varying creeds, through faith, through doubt,
Through labyrinths our flesh about,
The spirit on its pilgrimage,
Which seeks its endless Anchorage,
Makes its own Heaven where faith doth point,
Whose lodgment *There* is undisjoint !
Then, gentle Turk, we'll have no fear
Since love our paradise doth bear.
Our faith shall be a common one—
Our worship, love till life is done—
Our Mecca, each one's pulsive heart—
Our heaven the other's counterpart !
Thy father's will, and hate and power
May make remote our nuptial hour,
But, love, thy guardian Houris shall
With their divinest influence all
Save thee from Hassan's vile control,
And sisterly watch o'er thy soul.
As I am thine and thou art mine,
And both our lives, loves, hopes, combine,
We'll roam together, twinly blest,
And in Italia sweetly rest."

As though to mark with emphasis
His passion, he implants a kiss
Upon Kazui's carmine lip.
On her snowed cheek a tear doth drip
To crystallise her sentiment
And show her vivid, dear intent
(For 'tis a drop of joy, and not
Of woe which water thus begot).
With eyes—like fire-flies in the night
Lost in the dew, yet sparkling bright—
Of moisture, she looks into his
And views reflected trust and bliss.
Like the first streak of virgin dawn
Rekindling East with night o'erdrawn,
A brightening smile lights up her cheek
As thus, in answer, she doth speak :
" Dear Christian, when I gave my heart
I deemed it ne'er could backward start

As further tenant of this breast,
But that it constantly would rest
Within its lodgment near thine own :
Nor feared I faith, or sire, or frown,
Or issue possible to come,—
I wandered to my heart's true home.
Oh, let me, then, not prodigal
My heart away, whate'er befall !
Like swallows caught by adverse winds,
The tempest mates our loves, and binds
In nature's nuptials both our hearts,
Which nothing elemental parts.
Then, zealot of the Nazarene,
What can there be to come between
Two wedded hearts to wound or kill
Their palpitating, loving will ?
If I am thine and thou art mine,
What creed our lives can unentwine ?
The ivy clasped around the oak
Falls with the timber when the stroke
Divides and fells the guardian trunk,
And leaf and wood as one have sunk.
Loreo, then, to thee I cling
A simple but a loving thing
Of nature till death breaks the tie
And hearts, not creeds, teach how to die !
With thee, Venetian, will I roam
In trust across the highway foam
And, like new halcyons, meet our fate.
Alas, the hour grows very late :
My sire will miss me and will muse
Unhappy things why I abuse
His hearth by absence filialless.
Then, let us part with this caress,
And say good-night though that it be
A strain of heart-string mutually.
Good-night, dear love,—again good-night.”
“ Kazui, by the heavenly light
The moon is flooding o'er the earth,
I swear by all sweet virtue's worth

To guard, to honour, love, but thee !
Thou shalt my pilot ever be
Through tempest, sunshine, fair or foul
And be at last unto my soul
Its Iris wafting it to heaven !
As soft as is this breath of even,
May Fate upon thy head e'er sit,
And place a crown which stars have lit—
Like Ariadne's—on thy brow.
Such is my prayer, and such my vow ! ”
One mutual act to kiss again—
One farewell sigh responsive, when
A voice too ominously speaks
And parliament of fondness breaks.
“ Great Allah, have I lived to see
My daughter thus unfilial be ?
No longer daughter ! From this hour,
Ungrateful, stubborn child, this bower
Shall never cover more thy head :
My house (thy home) hold not thy bed :
Thy childhood's hearth shall thee forget :
Thy father's sun of love shall set
For ever on thy rebel heart :
The day on earth shall darkness part,
But thou shalt feel perpetual night :
Thine eyes (lamps of unfilial light)
Shall sparkle more ne'er in mine own—
Like stars o'er which black clouds are thrown,
Which change their sky into their tomb :
Each accent thine be as thy doom :
Thy fondest hope be fatal, too :
Thy wanton laughs be unto you
As hollow echoes breathed by Death
From his black skull with mouldy breath :
Thy new-made love be as the blight
That kills all blossoms in a night,—
All objects meeting it shall be
Soon withered ere they summer see :
Thy fond caress be as the fold
Around their prey which reptiles hold :

Thy peace be as the sullen sea—
Becalmed without, but feverishly
In agitation deep within :
Like th'aspen's restless leaf, and thin,
Thy heart estranged shall tremble till
Each pulse remains a hectic still :
And, oh, shouldst thou be parent, may
Good Allah teach thee how to pray
Propitious than *thy* parent more !
One *soft* word, for my *curse* is o'er.
Should age's snow revere thy head
And sanctify thy nature dread,
May each pure, chastened lock unfold
Some remnant purity untold :
And in such vesper of thy life
May'st thou one halo less of strife
Inherit than thine agèd sire :
And when thou ceasest to suspire,
And death brings everlasting night,
May Allah guide thy soul aright !
I've done. To-morrow's dawn shall see
Within the Sultan's harem thee :
Where thou shalt unremember all—
Thy Christian, sire, and filial fall.
But one more day-dawn in thy home
Shalt thou behold : so, with me come,
Undaughter'd offspring.—As for thee,
Vile Christian dog, away hence flee
Upon this instant, for thy life
Depends on flight from eager knife ! ”
Thus Hassan cursed, and thus he prayed,—
Thus threatened, and thus ever made
Himself unsired, and his one child
An orphan nominal. Less wild
Loreo looks and feels at his
New fate, for the still living kiss
Upon his lip Kazui gave,
Breathes hope—like sun along the wave.
Now with a glance of eloquence
Upon the girl, he hastens thence :

And, oh, the rhetoric within
His lingering look did doubly win
The Turkish beauty, who returns
A gaze with which deep language burns !
Loreo gone, she droops her head,
Whose silk doth o'er her bosom spread—
Like shadows of the evening on
The lily, which sinks with the sun.
With hands enclasped resignfully
On breast of alabaster, she
Moves slowly, with her snowy feet,
Into her home, where slaves shall greet
Her nevermore as child of it,
Nor for her nod shall servile sit !

5.

Across the lofty ceiling swing
Luxuriant lamps which lustre fling
On beauty languishing below
In variegated, wooing show,
Which makes the scene on earth divine
On which love's sun doth heavenly shine.
Bright are the intermingling lights,
And glorious all the flaming sights,
But brilliant more are the soft eyes—
Like twinkling stars in midnight skies,—
Their warm, lascivious, lightning gleams
Like heaven's-sent spirit in our dreams.
Their figures of voluptuous mould
Recline in ease where cushions hold,
In velvet silk, the marbled limb :
Their hair of raven colour dim
Float o'er their charms, like clouds at night
Which veil the moonlight from our sight :
Their gently palpitating breasts
Show like white violets' pulsive crests
Fanned by the evening zephyrs soft.
Some lounge and languid gaze aloft
Into the mosaic splendour arched
Around, till their deep thoughts have searched

Each sparkle for intelligence,
And sighs end their mute eloquence :
Whilst others, like a rippling stream
Of murmuring music-echoes, gleam
With smiles and laughter, joy and glee—
A bacchanal of pleasantry :
But one there is who sits alone—
Queen of herself on virtue's throne—
And o'er the beauty-dazzling scene
With sky-born influence serene,
Doth glance with foreign unconcern
Around, for in her eye doth burn
The lamp of meditation deep
Whose loving vestals never sleep :
Yet, languid is that glassy flame,
Which is a beacon but in name
Set in her midnight eyelash—like
A falling star doth brightest strike.
Her arms encircle now her head
As her voluptuous form doth spread
Itself across the tasselled couch,
As Venus in her shell did crouch :
Those arms (which bend more gracefully
Than Juno's swans all-daintily
Arched their proud necks for heaven's queen)
Fold in their snowy light serene
So artfully the tressèd charms
That they appear the skyish arms
Around Diana's form of light.
Her eyes now fix their whispers bright,
Now wander through the brilliant air—
As moonrise and the starlight pair.
Another sigh is softly breathed
And by her coral lips bequeathed,
When she arises (graceful more
Than Venus on the Cyprian shore)
And steps upon the carpet's down
Light as a sylph's foot earthward flown,
And moves along still deep in thought.
Her downward gaze is quickly caught

By an all-watchful pair of eyes
Which never from her own uprise
But watch their light—as flowers the sun,
Whose lives with heaven's beam are run.
She slightly startles—like a roe
When catching in the streamlet's flow
Her dazzling mirror,—and a blush
Of ruby o'er her cheek doth rush,
And her shy heart with fever'd pulse
(Till courage soon her feelings lulls)
Beats 'gainst her ivory bosom bare—
The snowiest avalanche is there.
And yet she knows not why she thus
Starts at the gaze, and, tremulous,
Beholds two eyes not foreign to
The rest around she too doth view :
But so it is ; she cannot turn
Her glance from eyes which thusly burn.
She passes o'er her brow her hand,
As if the vision to withstand,
And takes a step to onward go.
Vain is the move : her eyes *must* throw
Back o'er her lily shoulder just
One look which wonder says she must.
The other's eye is audible.
She feels her robe aerial
Now gently held and softly drawn
Towards eyes which, like those of a fawn,
Invite by their simplicity.
The maid now close to other, she
Doth pause in dubiousness and thought,
And, the initial action sought
Within the eyes still wooing hers,
She to the optic charm defers,
And lingers and reclines by it
As if her lonely mind unfit
Would by the fellowship regain
Its humour and be bright again.
“ Companion in this gay abode,”
The other says ; “ if I forebode

Too much while gazing in thine eye,
It is my fault, but I descry
In its bright mirror deep regret
At something thou canst not forget ;
And sorrow blends with suffering
While memory doth faithful cling
Unto its orphan'd habitant.
Yea, in that booklet-luminant
I read the page of hope resigned,
And some lost joy thou ne'er may'st find.
Ah, I'm unhappy too ! Time was
I dwelt within a sunbeam as
One of its motes, blest with the ray
Of heaven dazzling o'er my way.
I dreamt that life no night could bring
To cloud my joyous everything ;
That not an eve could touch my bliss
But that it would be shadowless,
Save, maybe, with a rosy shade
The lingering sun celestial made.
I watched my morning-star arise
To herald day across the skies ;
And, like a modern Chaldee, I
Within its lustre did descry
My paradise eterne methought.
That star is melted into nought,
And though the night doth alchemise
New orbs sometimes in Hope's far skies,
They are not mine : I cannot trace
My daylight constellation's face.
Perchance my present night shall see
Not e'en a morn-break, much less be
Engenderer of my lost star
To light my day with heaven afar.
I deemed my blushing youth could feel
No dew so soon along it steal
To chill its roseate blush and take
Its virgin scent, its promise break.
Life was to me a golden dream
And all the future did but seem

The sunrise of more blessed fate.
I felt my future had no date,
But that its joy was infinite,
Nor dreamt my hopes could ever flit,
Like meteors, through the changing air
And leave their brilliant seat so bare.
A pyramid of hope I reared,
Whose mental summit e'en appeared
More soaring than old Cheops' stones ;
But like th'Egyptian's granite ones,
Mine own are mouldering all with time.
' All ' ? Nay, *one* hope—one step to climb—
I've found at last. The trembling star
Which brought my footsteps from afar,
Hath guided me to all my joy :
But yet it may have some alloy,
For though 'tis in my fever'd hand
And I can touch it where I stand
Amid this sordid glitter, yet
I have not grasped it. Ne'er forget,
All-gentle maid, that joys may be
Within our passioned hand, yet we
May view them flit for aye away
Ere our fond fingers can assay
To circle and to grasp them fast.
I feared my search would longer last
For her of whom I was bereft
And to my fate was ruthless left ;
But, as I've said, a star of love
(Which seemed a herald from Above)
Hath lighted me to my fond goal—
The starriest way of my loosed soul—
So soon, for yesterday, when thou
Thyself arrived (I'll tell thee how
I strangely came, anon) I gained
Admittance here—not to be chained
To morbid luxury, and be
Bound to vile zest perpetually :
No, lady, *mine* was nobler aim
Than wishing for polluted fame.

Across the chaos of my mind,
When every hope I had resigned,
Love arched its rainbow, and the gloom
Lost all its halo of the tomb !
Oh, I could with immortal breath
Whose echo would survive my death,
Dilate to thee my passion for
My love, whom deeply I adore—
For her so truly mirror'd in
Thyself ! Now—now to feel I win
Again my treasure, I am blest,
And know at last my soulful rest.
Start not, dear lady, for I mean
Not to distress the harem queen :
Forgive the fervour of my tongue,
To love's best music highly strung.
And I have woman's privilege,
Though in thine eye doth doubtful lodge
The sensibility. Nay ; scan
Me further not. I know a *man*
Would fitter have such language breathed
For her who had to him bequeathed
Her heart to keep whate'er assail,—
Nay, nay ; don't stare : I'll draw my veil.
Ah, lady, tell me not that thou
Art happy here, for on thy brow
And in thy wild, heaven-kindled eye
I can the angry truth descry
That woe is partner to thy soul,
And sorrow doth thy heart control.
Say—say, oh gentle beauty, say
Dost languish not to be away
Far, far from this delusive den
Swayed by a beast of mortal men ?
If that thou dost, such eagerness
Is also mine, and such distress.
Methinks I could a secret plan
Invent to free us from this ban,
If thou wilt but consent to keep
My project a true secret deep

Shouldst thou or join me in escape
Or dost remain to wear the shape
Of puppet in the farce of sloth.
Thine answer ? ” “ Nay, thou speak'st for both, ”
In haste responds the dark-eyed maid :
“ Thou, stranger, when thy plans are made,
Shalt pilot be to liberty.
Trust thou in me, and I'll in thee :
For know thy tale is so much like
That of *my* heart, it warm doth strike
Through all my nature, and doth woo
My sympathy and trust for you.
Torn was myself from one I loved,
And from mine only joy removed,
To please a father's vile caprice
Who would my union have thus cease :
But, oh, dear stranger, yet I feel
My mate loves me ! In dreams will steal
His face so dear before mine own ;
And ere the vision sweet is flown,
We talk and talk till once again
My paradise I thus regain.
I see him now as yesternight
(When he in vision glimmered bright)
He came and smiled upon me, then
He vanished, but soon came again,
Yet this time, oh, he wore a smile
Which seemed the sunshine to beguile
Of its best ray—it was so bright—
And made a day of all my night !
Nay, more ; this time he clasped me close
(E'en Jacob th' angel held more loose
At Jabbok's stream till morning broke)
Then suddenly he even spoke—
Which he ne'er did in former dreams,—
And the undying echo seems
E'en now inhabiting mine ear :
But 'twas one word—an accent mere—
Which he in parting fondly spoke
(I quickly at the sound awoke,

As though my spirit would mate his
And follow to his sphere of bliss),
And that one word bequeathed to me
In softness was——” “Kazui!” the
Attentive other figure speaks,
And thus the maiden’s story breaks.
She startles, and a blush bepaints
Her cheek (as sunset gilds the saint’s
Niched marble brows through hallowed glass
Rich-hued which the cathedral has),
And rising from her posture, she
With lightning eye looks fearfully
Upon the lounging form below.
Her blushing tint doth come and go,
And breathless, timidly, she says :
“Great Byzas! Say what mystery sways
Thy mind that thus thou know’st my name?
My real name is here unknown,—
And thou a stranger, woman, too!
What wizard taught the name to you?
What Mopsus-prophetess art thou
To read thus my historic brow?
What divination hath revealed
To *thee* my name so private sealed?
I fear thy presence, stranger, so
From its mysterious force will go!
I tremble lest around my fate
Thine influence will bless too late!
I wish thee well, but we must part.
Be sure thy secret in my heart,
Will faithfully be ever kept,
And hope the tears thou here hast wept
Will in thy freedom flow in joy
And bring thee peace with no alloy.
Farewell to thee.” “Stay, lady, stay!”
The other urges: “What you say
About a mystery is true;
But it is lent to bless e’en you,
Though in these walls I dare not tell
What ’neath my veil and garb doth dwell.

If I can thy dear freedom aid
Why heed what 'mystery' hath made
Thee happy, and, with liberty
Of thy pent spirit, favoured thee?
Name thine own god—propose the oath—
And, sacred as the nuptial troth,
I'll pledge my word to see thee safe
Beyond these walls and vicious chafe
Of sordid habitants herein
Whose heaven is made of heathen sin!
Demand what bond thou wilt of me,
To all—and more—I will agree.”
Kazui pauses, and a tear
Of smallest crystal doth appear
Within the corner of her eye
As she the stranger doth descry
With intermingling doubt and trust.
The latter virtue uppermost,
She hopefully at length replies :
“ Kind stranger, I will not despise
Ungratefully thy proffered aid,
But to thy plans of exit made
I'll trustingly submit. Yet, tell
Me (should it break no mystic spell)
How my poor name familiarly
Became at first revealed to thee? ”
The other saith : “ No mystic art
Told me thy name or showed thy heart :
But yesternight within thy dream
'Twas whispered with another name.”
Kazui slightly starts, then says :
“ Oh, trait'rous sleep which thus betrays
Our dearest thoughts and secrets all!
What other name did I thus call? ”
Her mate replies : “ Loreo, dear ! ”
When cardiac blushes disappear,
Kazui smilingly confides :
“ Ah, 'twas a name of all besides
I love the most ! Yea, stranger, couldst
Thou know how much we love, thou wouldst

Not wonder that in dreams we talk,
And that our spirits daily walk ;
For—no, no, no—I do not dwell
Here, like the pearl within its shell :
My soul is in the unroofed sphere
Of royal liberty and where
I'm constant by his side and he
By mine in vigils lovingly.
Yea, thou companion of my state,
Were it not long, I would relate
My tale of love,—how first we met—
How strangely wooed—how vain creeds set
Our fate of separation thus.
Besides, 'twould pain me to discuss
A theme I must *try* to forget ;
But in my heart sepulchred, yet
Love rears the flower of memory
Upon its tomb unwitheringly.
So, thou kind stranger, pray assume
It all, and sigh not at my doom ! ”
She drops her head upon her breast :
Another tear to swell the rest
Already flooded on her cheek,
Then sighs—diplomatising—speak
Her nature's one component woe
And topic which she would unknow.
“ I'll change,” the other says, “ those tears
To pearls of joy ere there appears
Another sunrise past these walls !
I've bribed with gold (which e'en enthralls
A harem guard) him who will guide
Us safe unto the water's side
When, like the oil these lamps ignite,
The drowsy forms around to-night
Shall dwindle in a deeper faint—
Awake to miss us (as the Saint
Of old deceived the Roman arms
In gaol when freed by dazzling charms).
Retire, then, to thy couch and I
Will signal thee when we shall fly.”

They part—Kazui wakefully
To dream of love and liberty :
The other to strict vigils keep
Till chance shall from their slavish sleep
Wake both of them to liberty,
When hearts shall beat more pulsively.

6.

The tide is high along the beach
And up the rocks the wavelets reach,
Like molten silver gilding them
With sunrise—morning's diadem.
Yea, Helle's wave this morn is bright
And gentle in its flowing light
(More so than Leuce's hallowed wave
Which blessedly that isle did lave) :
Not as it rolled in fatal ire
That night around lone Hero's fire
When she the beacon-blaze did light
And all the waterway ignite
To Sestus from Abydos' shore
(Her starry eyes assisting more)
For fond Leander's gurgling-course
And bubbling-struggle to love's source :
Like angel o'er the dying, she
Kept vigils o'er the stormy sea,
And through the tempest watched the wave
With heavenly care, but could not save
Her loving wreck—too mortal he
To cross *such* Stygian flood where she
Embodied his Elysium all,—
Too weak to answer her dear call !
Around his frail and too brave form
The hellish waves coiled by the storm
(Laocoon's links ophidean ne'er
More fatal, though less solid, were) ;
No buoy could Hero throw to save,
But just a shriek along the wave—
Too immaterial to avail,
As was Alcyone's fond wail !

Dear Hero's torch that fatal night
 Burnt all so heavenly sure and bright
 That its pure flame Leander lit
 To shores immortal, where did flit,
 In new Hermaphroditean sex,
 Hero herself—love's noble wrecks !

7.

Bright is the tide, and bright the rock
 Which juts, without one fragrant shock
 Of herb, upon the shore as bare
 And wild, save for the pebbles there
 Of variegated beauty, and
 Stray shell-fish washed upon the strand—
 Poor exiles ostracised by
 The ocean, leaving them to die.
 The rock a cavern doth contain ;
 The cave two figures doth retain :
 The one seems gentler than her mate,
 But both in friendship seem cognate.
 “ And we are free—free as the flood
 Of light and wave this morn hath wooed !
 But, oh, I owe my liberty.
 My love, my heart, mine all, to thee !
 Yea, all ; for with no freedom, what
 Were life ?—the precious sight forgot
 By one struck blind, save what his mind
 Can all too transiently find
 Of light among the ruins of
 His recollection : life doth rove
 Before his buried eye but in
 Bright dreams, when it doth illumine
 His soul—like a soft spirit through
 His sense come dazzlingly to woo.
 Then, since, dear stranger, thou hast blest
 Me so, name my great debt, and rest
 Assured I'll pay it though it take
 A lifetime till I can forsake
 The delegation of the bond
 I seal to thee with feeling fond.”

She takes the other's hand in hers
And on it a warm clasp confers,
Whilst her dark eyes shine audibly
Though, from joy's fulness, tearfully
(Like two bright, solitary stars
Which else a cloudy midnight wears,
And shoots their heavenly brilliance through
The languid blackness rich with dew).
Thus looks Kazui whilst she gives
A clasp by which the other lives
In seeming animation new,
As when the sunbeam soft doth woo
The tulip by its touch so light—
Embrace but felt in wreaths all bright,—
Or honeysuckle's clasp around
The rose in wildness sweetly found.
Kazui pauses for reply,
Solicited by all her eye,
And th'other makes assay to speak,
But lips to utter are too weak,
And thought and doubt within the eye
Act deputies for a reply.
“Nay, nay, kind friend, I pause to know
My debt, which thou must not forego,”
Kazui urges; “and by this
Irrevocable, dearest kiss,
I wed thee, maid, in sisterhood;
And love shall be as yonder flood,
All-tireless rolling to a shore
Immortal, ebbless, evermore!
Together our fond barques shall ride
Till *There* we find, when rests the tide,
Him whom our soul now seeks in vain,
Since doom bids us not meet again
This side the Bar! Oh, then, receive
My simple kiss, so shall we weave
Ourselves—my heart with thine, nay, *all*
Of me to thee, whom I will call——”
“Loreo!” cries her molten mate
As she (nay, *he*) proceeds to state

His tale in homelier accents now—
Removing from his swarthy brow
The veil in venial treachery used,
Peruke, too, pardoned-love abused :
“ Yea, yea, Kazui, I’m indeed
Bereft of thee by but a creed ;
But reft no longer, for, by Christ,
We live who late were sacrificed !
Ah, dearest heart, fold closer still
My neck with kindling arms until
Assurance doth restore thy pulse
And thy white bosom unconvulse ! ”
Kazui, who with wounded breath
Hath list as to a voice in death,
Breaks her dear spell with a short sigh,
As in his resurrected eye
Shoots hers—a gleaming seraph come
To snatch the soul from out the tomb !
Her arms of Niphean lustre bind
Loreo’s neck so warmly, kind,
With their smooth links as soft and pure
As lily’s antlers, frail but sure.
With melting voice of joyfulness—
Like waters’ breeze—she doth address
Loreo, whilst she still doth cling
Upon his breast, a passioned thing—
As Omphale dependent clung
To Hercules ; and fateful hung
Iphigenia to her sire
Beside Diana’s Aulian pyre.
Kazui cries : “ Oh, I am dumb—
Joy doth my verbal tongue benumb—
To once translate my feelings deep
(’Tis done but by these tears I weep) !
The old Gymnosophistæ stared
Full in the sun whose hot disc glared,
From that orb’s rising till it set :
And, oh, I feel I ne’er can get
Away from gazing in thy face,
Wherein my creed and life I trace ! ”

Loreo, when another clasp
Hath circled its endearing grasp
Around the girl, replies first by
The soulful language of his eye
(The Paphian infant's cradle where
A Psyche makes divine a pair),
And now by accent which the maid
Hears as if it Apollo made
An echo of his lyre and tongue
(The Pythian hymn was never sung
So sweet as lovers' heavenly chords) :
" Kazui, all thy kindling words
Roll o'er my soul like lava's flood !
Though wintry woe entombed our bud
Of scented love, this freedom's spring
Doth exorcise the blessed thing,
And 'neath the sunshine of thine eye,
What autumn's breath can bid it die ? "
Kazui—whilst her fervid heart
In pulses frequent now doth dart
Against the ivory of her breast
(As dawning life all-birthful prest
Internally against the bust
Of her in purity—not dust
Of carnal mould—created by
Pygmalion's chisel heavenly)—
Saith : " Ah, but, Christian, though thou wast
Inhumed, methought, to me and lost,
Still, like the live Leucothean tree,
The grave bore frankincense to me !
But tell me how thou didst achieve
Thy harem entrance ?—how deceive
The Argus thusly to profane
Its dome, and masculinely gain
Thine Ion prize ? Ah, yet, why need
I know the means when now indeed
Th'effect hath both of us blest so ? "
Loreo answers : " Dear, then know,
The pilot was to all my bliss,
Thyself—the starrier Pole than this.

Yea, mine own helion-mirror, know
I had but gold to bribing show ;
And, loaning Roscius' subtle art,
Enacting Iphis' contra part,
I gained admission to the realm
Where beauty doth the sense o'erwhelm :
Thou know'st the rest, and, knowing, feel
The virtue I made thus to steal.
I'll hire a shallop and we'll flee
This now strange land to thee and me,
And on some other strand we'll wed
Where peace and joy their flowers spread
All-rosily before our feet,
And glassing skies our loves shall greet——”
“ See—see, Loreo,” fearfully
Kazui cries : “ where hastily
Armed Ottomans are coming with
Drawn scimitars ! Their horses' breath
Enwrap each rider like the cloud
Which Jove with Io did enshroud ! ”
“ By Heaven, it is the harem guard,
And we their quarry and reward !
Ah, now they spy us, and with heat
Increased they dash, as though the feet
Of their mad horses all were shod
With iron which the hellish god,
And th'other monarch of the sun,
Drove their fired Æthons with : each one
A Pegasus that strides the blast
To heaven ! Be brave, my girl ; thou hast
A Hector,—he an Æthon, too,
But shaped in lightning steel and true,
More swift than horse or Sultan's spite !
My sword shall, like a star in night,
Flash its protection o'er our heads !
Haste—haste, beloved, for ill unweds
Us for awhile ! In the recess
Deep vaulted in this wilderness
Of rock, as fast, my love, hie thee
As nymphal feet can lightly flee——”

“ And leave thee here to meet thy death ? ”
“ They’re here ! Flee—flee ! Deem not my death
So near while Heaven’s Eye doth watch
To save Her servant from one scotch
Of harm by heathen power or creed !
Flee, if thou lovest me indeed ! ”
She’s gone ! Loreo’s eye hath lost
Her form,—gone like the dazzling ghost
Of some expiring martyr-saint
(Too holy for a Raphael’s paint)
Chained to the stake but shoots the fume
Whose fire doth only clay consume,
To find beyond the circling cloud
Its Heaven of Light, immortal shroud !

8.

Set firm at his Thermopylæ,
Loreo guards defiantly
The door to more than nations’ spoils.
Each of the Sultan’s horse recoils
Before the glitter of the blade
(Which his ally the sun hath made
In Gorgonising lustre thus)
Flashed by this new Leonidas.
The mounted warriors group around
Th’untrembling youth : not e’en a sound
Escapes his lips defiance seals :
His marbled brow resolve reveals ;
And both his eyes seem molten flame,
Like that which fires the sun the same.
The chieftain first the silence breaks
(Loreo at the screech ne’er quakes)
And cries : “ Base Christian dog, dost thou
Defy great Allah ? By the vow
We swore to him and swear again,
If thou dost baulk us to regain
The Sultan’s bride whom thou didst steal,
Allah shall purify our steel
Which makes thy death the treasure’s key !
Our strict commands were to spare thee

If thou in peace resigned thy theft :
If hostile, she was to be reft
Unmercifully from thy care,
Though thy vile blood did piteous stare
And eloquently plead for thee
In liquid numbness vitally !
Choose, then, this instant thy sure fate.
Dost see yon cloud which doth not wait
But float apace unto the sun ?
When it its passage soft hath done
And reacheth the all-glorious ball,
Thy doom is sealed though thou dost call
With Stentor's throat upon thy Man
Whose carpentry evolved a plan
To deathless save His fellow dust—
Him mortal to a mortal's thrust !
Thou art a thief, so He, forsooth,
Will have thee and the old one, *both*,
Beside Him e'en ' this very day '
In ' Paradise ' if thou'lt but pray !
Ha—ha ! We'll see. Thy dial is
Now pointing thee near to thy bliss.
The cloud sails on—thus Christians say
Their angel softly wings her way
When on her embassy of death
To waft to Heaven their earthly breath.”
Loreo listens to the threat—
His cheek unblanched and glowing yet,—
And staring in the chieftain's eye,
Disdains to look into the sky,
Or yet a voiceful breath to draw,
Or pulse to shew he feels their awe,—
Fixed stern as Death in silence near
Young beauty on her gloomy bier,
Who with his blank eye o'er the clay,
Dares love to tear the pall away !
Loreo, with his steady sword,
Defies the foe's commanding word :
His stand he takes, and doth await
The worst or best decree of Fate.

“ ’Tis on at last—the cloud is on
And doth obscure the gazing sun ! ”,
Exclaims the chief in iron tone ;
“ Thy respite, Christian, thus is done.”
Now, turning to his eager band,
He shouts the welcomed, fierce command :
“ Slaves, do your office : strike him down,
And be his Christian carcass thrown
Flat on this spot—a monument
In brief to pilgrims hither sent
Of Allah’s wrath and Allah’s creed !
Nay ; since I long to see him bleed,
My sword shall pilot him unto
His ‘ Heaven ’ past yon sea of blue ! ”
Ere scarce his voice hath lost its sound,
He, like a panther, swift doth bound
With hoof and blade upon the boy
As though he were a target-toy.
One flash of heathen scimitar,—
One cry, replied by air afar,—
The chieftain dead rolls to the ground,—
His frightened horse away doth bound !
Now, with wild, savage shrieks, the rest
Of Tartars level at the breast
Of cool Loreo all their steel.
One—two—and three, in blood they reel,
And leave behind a gasping curse
With the last breath heaved by each corse :
But, circled with the lightning, who
Th’ethereal fetters can undo ?
Loreo fights, but faints and feels
Death’s mouldy presence ’midst the steels
Which flash immortal gleam around
His head—like that tiara bound
In stars on Ariadne’s brow.
He sinks ; and, with one feeble blow
His drooping muscle lifeless flings
Against the foe, he vainly clings
Unto the air in falling now
With noble death bleached on his brow !

“ Allah be praised ! ”, the others cry ;
“ The dog in silence now doth lie !
Search we the cave until we find
(We dare not leave her here behind)
The harem queen, and safe convey
Her to the Sultan, so obey ! ”
“ Stay,” interrupts another ; “ did
He not our carriage back forbid
Of her should she conniver prove
Of this vile Christian, and from love
For him, should seek to baulk our plan ?
If so, the fate of this same man
Was to be shared by her, and both
Left to their long, polluted troth.
Then, comrades—soldiers of the Sun,—
We must not leave our task undone :
The Sultan’s bride proved loyalless
(Since in this rocky wilderness
Of winding path in vaulted dark
She scorns love, power, of regal Turk
By fleeing and by hiding here)
We’ll make this rock her sepulchre ! ”
A hoarse response—like jackals’ bark—
Greets him who seems their patriarch,
In affirmation of his mode
To make the girl’s eterne abode
Within the rock,—without a leaf
Of cypress to bend o’er in grief
And mourn in silence lone and long
The victim fair by all the throng
Of world besides forsaken quite :
Its constant tears (when dew at night
Re-moistens its pure, emerald eye
With tints of virtue from the sky)
Flow sympathetic on our tomb—
To quicken not, but in the gloom
To rear the bud of memory
And point the blossom to the sky !

9.

The sordid host dismount, and with
Expenditure of weary breath,
Dislodge sufficient of the flint
As serve to seal the monument
Of poor Kazui, and to let
No spark of sunshine therein get.
Their sextonship completed, they
Remount and gallop on their way,
Bequeathing wasted scoffs and jeers
Which neither calm Loreo hears
Nor yet his live Leucothea,—
The first to stare the pulseful sea
With senseless eye ; the other to
Her ebbing life in darkness view !

10.

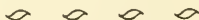
Ah, who shall paint, or feel, or see
Kazui's dread and agony ?—
The sateless vulture at her heart ?—
The wave which makes her bosom start
In one upheaving gulf of woe ?—
The glazed distress her eye doth show
(E'en like a star in fear to fall) ?—
The darkness of her mental pall ?—
The accent of her deep lament,
As though by Ceres it were lent ?—
The rivulet within her eyes,
Which Sorrow's trident makes arise ?—
The line of anguish on her face
No Raphael's brush could truly trace ?—
The stealing spasm through her soul,
Like Niobe's that through her stole ?
Yea, who shall count the lingering years
Pre-dated by her soulful tears ?
Perchance this living Tullia
Shall, in her tomb, enkindle a

Poetic lamp of purity
 Unto some curious future eye ;
 And her dear, pious, soulless frame,
 When touched by hand of clay the same,
 Shall run to ashes—shrinking lest
 The touch defiled her virgin breast !

TO MY BELOVED.

THE sunshine of life may all flicker and wane ;
 The pleasure of friendships may all disappear ;
 Youth's smile may e'en change into age's sad pain ;
 Our many past memories may bring but a tear,—
 Still, still, there's a starlight when day hath declined ;
 A virtue more steadfast than friends or their smiles ;
 A power by no season or date e'er defined ;
 One queen of the mind, and all thoughts she beguiles,—
 Dear heart, it is Love !

Yea, life may become but a desert on earth ;
 Ambition may cheat us and wound all our pride ;
 Life's cup may contain but sour dregs from our birth,
 And cherished and dear ones may pass from our side,—
 There's still an oasis, an e'erspringing well,
 To succour, refresh and re-kindle our soul ;
 A chalice of crystal whose draught hath a spell ;
 A gift all-eternal, beyond Fate's control,—
 Beloved one, 'tis Love !



ONLY THOU.

I'm sitting on our trysting stile,
And longing in the throstle's note
To feel that charm which doth beguile
Like music coming from thy throat—
But 'tis not thine !

And in the light upon the flower
I seek to trace thy crystal eye
And borrow brightness for an hour
To make the evening shadows fly—
But 'tis not thine !

The snowdrop gleams in purest white
And seems to whisper : " Gaze on me " ;
But though its tint is heaven's light,
And virtues in its bloom agree,
It is not thou !

I watch the birth of vesper's star
And mark how it prolongs the day :
Yet, though its lustre thus afar
Dims every other stellar ray,
It is not thou !

Not on the earth, not in the sky,
To me dwells thy dear counterpart :
There's only one form ever nigh—
There's to my soul one only chart—
Dear, it is thou !

PARTED.

(A Song.)

THE ocean is nursing me, love,
Upon its rough bosom and cold ;
I'm nestling not now to thee, love,
Enchained by thine arms' dearest fold !
Chorus : Let the light from thine eye
Dance upon the dark foam,
And thy message of sigh
Call me backward to home !

The winds tear my cheek to-night, love,
As lonely I gaze in the dark :
Hope's torch they will blow out quite, love,
For tost is my desolate barque !
Chorus : Let the light, etc.

My cheek hath no velvet now, love,
Imparted by touch of thine own ;
Thy lips do not warm my brow, love,—
In desert of ocean I'm lone !
Chorus : Let the light, etc.

And as my jet locks now fly, love,
Blown rudely by winds of the sea,
Toy not with thy gold do I, love,
Which fringes thy brow bent to me.
Chorus : Let the light, etc.

I only can see *one* star, love,
Which kindly looks down here on me,—
The light from thine eye though far, love,
For me illumines thus the sea.
Chorus : Let the light, etc.

Though cloudy my voyage is, love,
As now I ride from thee away,
Dream fondly each night on this, love,
I'll come back while thou light'st the way !
Chorus : Let the light, etc.

Yea, I will come back to thee, love ;
Thy heart beat again next to mine :
The lips our souls' altar be, love,
And two wedded lives shall combine !
Chorus : Let the light, etc.

*

FOR EVER.

THE years may part us far and wide,
And time may wreck the bloom of youth,—
Our love, like the perpetual tide,
Shall flow and be a living truth.

Though pain may often wring our souls,
And sorrow dim our brightness oft,
Love through it all unceasing rolls
To heal and make affliction soft.

When age's snow falls on our heads
And with its winter blights our lives,
'Tis love which then its starlight sheds
And to the ice new sparkle gives.

Yea, when this life draws near its close
And eyelids fold the sight in gloom,
Love then its heavenly Iris throws
To point the soul beyond the tomb !

LINGERING THOUGHTS.

WHEN stranger eyes shall meet thine own,
And other lips prove bitter-sweets :
When love its attributes disown,
And wanton voice thy passion greets,
Have thou a lingering thought of me.

When sunbeams fail life to adorn,
And silver thread of faith is strained
And snapp'd by cruel hands of scorn :
When shallow cup of bliss is drained,
Bestow a lingering thought on me.

When arms of coldness fondle thee,
Thy golden locks false fingers part :
When voice with hollow vows agree :
When thorn deceitful rives thy heart,
Thou may'st have lingering thoughts of me.

When in thy heavenly eye shall glance
Another of false light and base :
When pity is not shewn, perchance
Through thy distress of mind will chase
Some little lingering thoughts of me.

When thy dear bosom heaves with pain
At unresponsive tender love :
When thy warm heart pants all in vain
To make the frozen other move,
God give thee lingering thoughts of me !

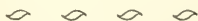
When thy pure heart against thy breast
Beats like the loving tidal wave
Against the rock and breaks its crest,
Wrecked in the storm I do but crave
That thou have lingering thoughts of me.

When thou upon the beach of life
Stand'st all alone before the waste,
No friend for star, but darkness rife,
The harbour-light lost and untraced,
Sweetheart, have lingering thoughts of me.

Yea, when thy frailsome barque must ride
Those worldly billows by itself
Without a pilot at thy side,
I ask when crossing such a gulf
That thou'lt have lingering thoughts of me.

And, oh, when age forlorn shall steal
Thy roseate bloom of transient youth,
I ask thy heart to unconceal
The days when *both* were young, and Truth
Shall bring thee lingering thoughts of me !

When this cold world looks on the scene
And mocks thy tears with ruthless jest :
When thy fond hopes turn sorrows keen,—
'Midst all the gloom hear my behest :
Oh, have one lingering thought of me !



NIGHT AND DAWN.

How sad it often is that we
May not the curtain of the past
Draw o'er our lives eternally—
No future shadows to be cast !

Yea, oft we'd give old sexton Time
Much more than gold if he could make
Our present lives the more sublime
And bury years ne'er to awake.

Ah yet, 'tis sometimes passing sweet
To lift the veil of former years,
And in the panorama greet
Old faces which we lost in tears !

God, in this life's e'er changing scene,
Oh, let our brightest pictures start—
Like star-lights, making earth serene
When sunbeams of the day depart !

A REVERIE.

TIME writes with changing hand
Our doom from hour to hour,
But past his rude command
Our souls and hearts have power.

A VALEDICTORY SATIRE.

(*To ——.*)

THOUGH we now part
 Silent and lone,
Whole is my heart—
 Nothing undone.
Tears may be shed ;
 Hearts may be strung ;
Ache may the head ;
 Dull be the tongue ;
Locks may be grey ;
 Lips may be cold
On life's decay
 Of young and old ;
Hope, on the wing
 Of ill success,
Flee to nothing
 And to distress ;
Bosoms may heave
 Ætnas of love ;
Hands interweave
 From friendship's grove
Roses most fond,
 Garlanding hearts ;
Lives may despond,
 Pierced by the darts
Fate kindless throws
 (Careless of all
Earth's joys or woes,
 Whate'er befall)
To young and old,
 Rich and the poor,
Timid and bold,
 Scholar and boor,

Weak and the strong,
Worthy and not,
Sole and in throng—
None are forgot ;
Feet may be sore,
Limbs crippled be,
Walking hard o'er
Life thornily ;
Knees totter fast
Halting adown
Life's hilly vast,
With age's frown ;
Friends may be few,
Foes many be
(This is oft true !)
Such friends may flee ;
Life be Mont Blanc,
Wearing the snow
Ceaselessly long
On a lone brow,—
These and the rest
Of sourest things
Touch not my breast
Nor my heart-strings
If but from thee
Emanate same,
For I am free,
More than in name.
Happy art thou
Thus thou hast riven
Our fond chain now
Heavenly given ?
Ah, sear that tongue
By which the lie
Is thusly sung !
Ever be dry
That moisture vain
Dewing thy lip ;
Palsied thy brain
Thus letting slip

Dregs of the Soul—
Nature's machine
'Neath God's control ;
Chief hath this been
Of all His skill :
Jasper's rich Spray
From Heaven's Rill
Flowing this way
To lave mankind :
Crystal essence,
We are too blind—
Wanting the sense
Transcendent sight—
To once behold
God's kindled Light
We thus enfold :
Essence supreme
Angelic-breathed :
Immortal dream
Death has bequeathed :
Limitless thing
Viewless, untouched :
King o'er a king,
It hath ne'er crouched
To Science' will :
Empress of man,
Queen of all skill,
Earth cannot scan
This mystic force
Linking us all
To a new course
Under its call.
Classics may guess
(No more, if that)
What Death doth press
By its fiat ;
For, like the eye
Scanning the sea,
We must descry
Space wide and free,

With billow'd path
Atmosphere cold
Prospect of wrath
Which clouds enfold,
Vacuous goal
Fearful in view,—
Thus is the soul
To me and you !
Yea, smother now
Vain fearful words,
For to thy brow
Sooner the swords
Sorrow and Time
Will excavate
Thy blooming prime
(Chaotic state !).
Time tells the truth
By Nature sung—
Liberal in ruth—
Spite of man's tongue,
Where'er we be,
Whate'er we do,
Of what degree,
Faithless or true,
Hated or loved,
Howe'er we feel—
Rigid or moved,
Warm or as steel.
Sophocles said,
In olden time,
That of a maid
From any clime
We write the vows
On water's slate
That never knows
Permanent state.
He didn't err
In saying this—
Though, 'sooth, a blur
Shaded his bliss !

(That writer who
Would record speech
Fountained in you
Would soon beseech
Mountains to shield
His crazy head :
Seas would not yield—
Ink, though, instead—
Liquid enough
To palpably
Echo the stuff
Whelming from thee !).
Hide that twin hill
Heaving with snow
Which, like the rill
Hebrus did flow,
Covers beneath
What I once thought
Love did bequeath—
Heart-gold unbought,
But won divine
(Oh, that such gem—
Cheating Heaven's Mine—
Be " Brummagem " !).
Avalanche-frost
Sweeps o'er that heart,
Quenching the host
Of each good part
The attribute
Dearest to God,—
Our best pursuit
While life we plod.
Misery can
Easier be given
To any man
And his life riven
Wider apart
By spiteful deeds,
Than be his heart
Staunched when it bleeds.

Purer than gold,
 Brighter than sun,
 Ne'er to be sold,
 Immortal won,
 Holy as Heaven,
 Angelic fire,
 When nobly given
 To man inspire,
 Is woman's love
 (Dewdrop sublime
 Dropt from Above,
 Crystall'd by Time,
 Treasured by Life,
 Frozen by Death—
 In jealous strife,—
 So to bequeath
 Icicled gem
 Hanging within
 Its Maker's Realm).
 Such should have been
 Thine, falsest maid ;
 But let me not
 That thing upbraid
 Better forgot.
 Ne'er let thine eye
 Sparkle so fair—
 Basilisks lie
 Full doubly there.
 Stifle thy voice
 So siren-sweet,
 Lest, to rejoice,
 Some ass will greet
 Thy filial note :
 Yet, if thou wouldst
 Sing what I wrote
 (E'en as thou shouldst)
 I will dictate
 The lyric verse
 (Thy natal fate
 Eve did rehearse) :—

- “ Alas, my mother Eve, that thou
Hast disappeared from worldly sight !
Had th’other fruit kept thee till now,
This twentieth century were bright.
- “ But thou, poor witless parent past,
In thy first school didst e’en subtract
Our mortal pleasures and didst cast
A transient balance so abstract :
- “ Yea, with deceit we multiply
What pleasantries we summon up,
And then, with aches and bleared eye,
But ciphers show when we sum up.
- “ Life is too short. Ah, couldst thou not,
In that foreknowledge Eden breathed,
Have fondly seen thine issue’s lot
And, in fond sympathy, bequeathed
- “ The essence attribute of Heaven
Called *Life* in worldly lexicons ?
Then th’only cup to mortals given
Were gladness unsepulchred once !
- “ Our grave-called friends (eternal guests !)
Would ne’er embark on unknown seas
And leave us watching darkling crests
To meet such fate on life’s decease !
- “ And *thou* canst tell, doomed firstly thus,
What ’tis to stand upon the beach—
Heart, tide, both, beating emulous—
And friends behold from vision’s reach
- “ Embark for ever on that flood
Which knows no flow, but pauseless ebb !
And, self-made mummies, when we’ve stood
In hotter tears Sennacherib.

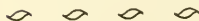
- “ Dew’d fading Zion’s charnel-plain
 (Each tear reflecting death’s last scene)
We learn *that* life thou sold’st in pain
 Is breath which on a glass hath been !
- “ Yea, then our tears are scalding more
 Than those which laved Achilles’ cheek
When that cold beauty spread before
 His sword, Penthesilea sleek :
- “ More bitterly than Scipio wept
 To view Carthage’s blazing spoil ;
And more than Cæsar o’er the cleft
 Remains of Pompey from the broil.
- “ ‘ Life,’—essence of Divinity,
 Around which nucleus briefly winds
Our fleshy chain linked mortally—
 Till Death’s prompt hand the clasp unbinds !
- “ The finest gold Pangæus gives
 Could not afford man’s Paradise ;
Nor her rich roses wrap our lives
 In bloom eternal ’neath the skies.
- “ Nor purest gold from Damos’ mine
 Could buy his ransom from the dead ;
Nor Pæstum’s fairest rose entwine
 Earth’s wreath eterne around his head.
- “ No Baiæ’s bubbling waters could
 Refresh his deathful, scalding thirst ;
Nor, flowing from perpetual mould,
 Could life revive, his irons burst.
- “ Though that he slept in marble from
 Pentelicus he’d dream the same,
And would no purer rise therefrom
 Than tombless souls without a name.

- “ Nor could Carystus’ marble, nor
That of Docimia, Chios too,
His soul immortal sepulchre,
Which unto judgment earlier flew.
- “ Marpessa, Proconnesus, too,
Were likewise impotent to keep
Corruption from a chosen few
Who ’neath such mouldering marble sleep.
- “ Nor could the splendour of a tomb
Reared in Hymettus’ marble pure
Revoke his ante-written doom,
Or safe from hell his soul immune.
- “ Not that world’s wonder which of old
Lent earth a new magnificence
And which Mausolus’ clay did hold,
Could Hell or Heaven to us dispense.
- “ Love all : earth’s life is more than short—
The play-ground of th’eternal school.
Then, let us join in happy sport ;
Soon will the bell call every fool !
- “ Death is the portal ’neath whose shade
We all must pass ne’er to return,
And know our final doom thus made
Beyond the ashes in our urn.
- “ Yea, urns of alabaster-make
May treasure to the world we lose
Our mocking dust for love’s dear sake,
Our *souls* must past the vase repose !
- “ Our skull bequeathed to living men
Lends them a solemn mirror to
Behold their state of nothing when
They that same journey soon must do.

- “ Death’s finger on our dial’d life
Points to us all our closing hour ;
And though we’d turn from such a strife,
His very aspect breaks our power !—
- “ Thou Being of all beings, Who
Formed all the worlds on wondrous plan,
And lent Thy holy Mirror too
When, as his Potter, moulding Man,—
- “ Thou Alpha, Omega, oh, hear
My nature’s humble prayer to Thee,—
Thou Whom creation doth revere,
And by strong faith Thy Glory see !
- “ Teach me to bend beneath Thy will,
To tread my destined path with joy,
To know the peace Thou dost instil ;
And Thy blest vigil e’er employ !
- “ I often wander, like a sheep
From its own mountain home of peace ;
But do Thou in the pathway keep
My slippery feet till life’s decease !
- “ When I am, by the common lot,
Beset by sin and dangers rife,
Protect me, that I falter not,—
Thou Who dost guard the sparrow’s life !
- “ Though in my health I Thee forget
And bask oblivious to Thy power,
Oh, in Thy bounteous mercy, yet
Forgive and teach me in that hour !
- “ This life is Thine—I dare not claim
So nameless and divine a gem :
For Jesus’ sake, do Thou reclaim
It lastly for Thy Diadem ! ”—

Take my hint, dear,
And write thine own
Epitaph here,
Else when thou'rt flown
Thou shalt have none :
Plautus did this ;
Then, why not one
Earth will not miss ?
Not e'en a horse
Though Æthon led
Thy purple hearse,
Would a tear shed.
Thy pearly neck
Render obscure,
For it will wreck
What it doth lure.
Thy melting eye
Amber'd (like mine)
Let none descry,
Or cease its shine
(*Thine* may have dropt
From the rich trees
Abalus cropt
With Nature's ease ;
Or may have given
Basilea's
Amber'd isle even
Her primal trees).
Mingled with joy
These graces all,
Free from alloy,
From Nature fall ;
But Heaven shall ask
Thee to account
To Her the task
Thou canst surmount
Never, I fear ;
And must be told
Thy full career—
Acts manifold.

Now (as daughters
Of Babylon
At the waters
Sadly hung on
Boughs of a tree
Their harps of old)
My lyre must be
E'en in the fold
Of Calypso's
Branches—I mean
Arms (don't suppose
I want to wean
My muse by this
Pause abruptly
And my *pen* is
Thus “ up a tree ” !).
Like that fish-queen,
Semiramis,
Vanish though e'en
In dovelet bliss
(Like Noah's bird,
Come not again,
For 'twere absurd
After the rain !).



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